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THE PRESENT CRISIS IN VALUES

Edited by

John B. Chethimattam

ISSN 0970-1125

Vol. XXV No. 149

jeevadhara

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

The Present Crisis in Values

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John B. Chethimattam

Jeevadhara

Kottayam - 686 041

Kerala, India

Tel. (91) (481) 597430

Vol. XXV No. 149

September 1995

JEEVADHARA

is published every month
alternately in English and Malayalam

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Editorial

In this issue of *Jeevadhara* we are publishing the main papers presented at a Seminar held at the St. Joseph's Seminary, Alwaye, May 4-7, 1995, to mark the Silver Jubilee of *Jeevadhara*. The topic was the decline of the influence of moral values in all aspects and departments of public life today. It was an attempt to study ethical values not purely from the point of view of theology or philosophy but also from the side of everyday experience of people. Hence it was an interdisciplinary seminar, with the active participation of scholars from different disciplines like sociology and economics.

We can safely state that it was Friedrich Nietzsche, who in his virulent criticism of modernity and its discontents, started the present day discussion of ethical values. He claimed that the holy cow of traditional ethics instead of being derived from any firm metaphysics was in fact only a preconceived system on which metaphysics itself was built up. Those value systems themselves were based on God conceived very much like a grandfather who looked over the shoulders of the child and kept a record of all his mistakes and constantly nagged at him. "Every great philosophy has hitherto been a confession on the part of its authors and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; moreover, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy have every time constituted the real germ of life out of which the entire plant has grown. To explain how a philosopher's most remote metaphysical assertions have actually been arrived at, it is always well (and wise) to ask oneself first what morality does this (does he) aim at." Nietzsche addressing his fellow human beings in his role of an "untimely man", who had to say things that people did not want to hear, declared that humanity had come of age, that the old grandfather God was dead, and that humanity had to build up its morality from within its own experience.

Political scientists are concerned with the formal structure of political life, constitutions, codes and principles, while other disciplines are sceptical of the value of such studies. There is,

however, a close association of political science with history, law, philosophy and ethics on account of the effort of society to place itself under some general order of rational and moral kind. Hence there is need of constitutional law to define the ideals which a given society proposes for itself in order to guide the behaviour of groups and individuals viewed mainly from the standpoint of the legal and moral norms. These rarely do come as the subject of any systematic empirical study in their own right. Hence ethics comes in only for the apologetic purpose of defending a democratic form of government as in the English speaking world, or to propose some supra-individualistic conception of state as in Europe. These constitutional principles tend to be idealistic on the assumption that adoption of certain principles in the abstract guarantees the goodness of the consequences. In fact, however, the play of national interests often distorts the initial intent or policy.

Today moral values are formulated mostly from below, from history, individual psychology and literature. By the very fact that history is not a mere record of events but a judgement on the nature of events in order to predict the future one has to be selective of events and personalities to show who are the heroes and who the villains, what are beneficial and what are harmful. Here a certain moral discernment between right and wrong, good and evil becomes inevitable, since nobody would want to install an evil character and selfish psychopath as the leader of the onward march of human history. In the field of psychology what is known as "psycho-history" has gained great prominence in the study of ethical values. There is a strong sense of the negative and repressive character of ethical consciousness in its most familiar forms and an equally strong intention to remedy the abnormal impact of moral do's and don'ts. Books like Freud's own study of Woodrow Wilson and Erick Erickson's studies on Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King examine the harm done by the preconceived moral imperatives entailed in the present communal control of our psyches and the eventual liberation from its domination and torment. They outline the ego strengths and the identity crisis that accompany their acquisition.

But moral values are the strong underlying concern of novels and other forms of contemporary literature. Of course a good majority of them emphasize the "Great Tradition", the values

upheld as its heritage by a particular dominant class, just like the aristocratic morality of Aristotle that discounted the masses as incapable of coming up to the standards of the nobility. But there are authors like D. H. Lawrence and E. M. Forster who propose a morality that goes across the boundaries of the class, and show a moral relation of friendship and respect between human beings on different sides of the lines that divide class from class and race from race.

There is another group of writers like Virginia Woolf, George Eliot, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Kafka and Beckett that attempts to portray character through action, and through the modalities of perception and feeling. Their focus is on the inner life of characters than the presentation of prime events in which these characters are involved. In their novels nothing very much happens and we know of the events mostly through the memories and ruminations of the characters. There are two trends discernible here. Some following the Nietzschean line of thinking emphasize a moral individualism conceiving a moral personality in terms of a conscious and willed antithesis to the common life of people which lacks a morally acceptable ordering of the cosmos or of human society. The other group ascribes great importance to the life of the common man, in an effort to express what is universal and recurrent in the human situation. For this it creates characters that are like mythic personalities not bound by the circumstances of time and place and social provenience. They project new and powerful images of Everyman and express the contemporary sense of the opacity and hopelessness of the human's moral predicament.

But the main focus of morality today is in business and economics where interests of the rich and the poor, of employers and employees, of entrepreneurs and customers come into conflict. This is where the traditional moral values and assumptions are continually being eroded and challenged. With the collapse of Marxism there is a resurgence of capitalism and the call for an open market economy as the only way of hope for progress. The general plea is that only an open market can encourage increased investment in developing countries and only an abundant flow of capital can lift the backward peoples from their poverty and misery. The positive goals of a free market economy are clearly explained: It alone can enable people to realize widely different personal goals

and provide incentives for action, restraint and discipline. In a situation of scarcity, which is the case in most of the resources that sustain human life, competition cannot be avoided, and what is important is to make that competition open and honourable with a balancing of advantages and disadvantages. It cannot be controlled by any amount of moral preaching from the outside but only by stressing the rules of the game and creating a morality from within. Free market demands fellowship bringing together cooperation and competition, and economic freedom is a vital component of a free society today.

But the principal issue is whether there can be any free market without a certain economic equality among the participants in the process of buying and selling. In several countries where the major part of the resources and especially the means of production, are in the hands of a very small minority will not a free for all scramble for the available goods make the poor poorer and the rich richer? When the buying power of a South African is eight times that of an Indian, and that of an American five times that of a South African, how can there be an equitable commerce of buying and selling among these greatly disparate economies? Will not a free market economy be just another form of colonialism that will enable the rich and powerful to gobble up the meagre wealth of poor nations? What makes economics a field of hot ethical discussion today is the fact that the poverty of large masses of humanity is not an accident, but caused by the greed of a section of free and manipulative human beings and hence a sin.

The well developed subaltern studies have exposed the dynamics of colonial control in all areas of human life, especially politics and economics exercised by the powerful nations of the West over the subordinate peoples of Asia and Africa. The Liberation Theology of Latin America shows a new method in theologizing taking the experience of long oppressed peoples and their new empowerment for asserting their legitimate rights against their oppressors as a major locus theologicus. Here ethical values are placed squarely in the meeting space of the human with the human, in the conscious encounter between the oppressed and the oppressor. A new approach to moral values is discerned in the decision making process of human beings who in all their

actions implicitly aim at their final goal and discriminate actions as right or wrong, in the mediating system of social structures of circumstances and consequences.

We are giving here the main papers presented at the Seminar. No effort is made to reduce them all to any synthetic perspective. In fact starting with the inaugural talk by K. G. Adiyodi who advocates an empirical as well as religious approach to morals, the different papers present the distinctive view points of their disciplines. No common statement was made at the end of the seminar since that would be against its spirit of a divergent convergence of different disciplines on values. The diversity of perspectives emphasizes the need for an ongoing discussion of the issues.

John B. Chethimattam

Values in a Mad World

It is a mad, mad world. Modern societies that have taken to non-traditional styles of living and thinking everywhere in the world are to varying degrees immoral, corrupt, violent, parochial, communal, greedy, and given to worldly pleasures. The problem has of late become so acute that an ordinary upright and peace-loving citizen, still clinging to his traditional value systems, becomes a misfit and finds it difficult to live with honour and dignity in such societies. The result is real fits who are the salt of the earth become misfits in such societies and subjects of ridicule, and misfits parade themselves as fits. "Him and his bloody principles" they shout and declare, "we will force him to give up or compromise". And the methods and tactics used to achieve such goals are invariably inhuman at both physical and psychological levels. Under pressure, the upright individual withdraws helplessly into his shell. He may withdraw but aggressive societies would not rest until he has been pulled out, chastised, punished, and made to conform to what the majority subscribe to. Such groups exercising pressure on individuals could be political, communal and so on, but all driven by the common motive of capturing power and wealth. These groups may wear a fashionable mask of altruism and public good but are out and out to share the cake amongst themselves to the exclusion of others.

It is common knowledge that value systems, faiths, beliefs and practices of a society change both spatially and temporally. But they have in general a degree of durability or stability as far as the basic features are concerned at least until they have been transformed by these new prophets seeking wealth and pleasure. Value systems of conservative or orthodox societies undergo little change over the centuries for fear of reprisal from gods and demons. Patches of primeval forests, the Sarpakavus, are with us today just because of this faith based on the fear of God, though

several of them have disappeared in part or altogether and put to different land use. People now realize, after having received modern education, that all this talk we have heard of divine intervention or reprisal if sarpakavus are destroyed, is a sheer ploy to keep people away from destroying them. But a new realization is also slowly dawning upon them that sarpakavus have to be preserved at all costs for a different reason, the reason being ecological. There is clearly a shift here in faith (which forms one of the cornerstones of any value system), the old spiritualistic faith based on superstition and myths being replaced by a more modern scientific faith based on truth, detachment, objectivity, and precision: A case of God being replaced by Science. It becomes evident, therefore, that the quality, if I may use the word of the value system of any society at a particular point in time depends upon the quality of spiritual and material knowledge of that society, the more informed and forward-looking societies having value systems that can stand the test of time. Take, for example, the ecological concepts of ancient Indians and the Red Indians. Semitic religions catapulted man to a slot immediately below that of God and also gave man unlimited powers and freedom to exploit nature for his materialistic pleasure. This was on the presumption that amongst creations man alone has a soul and animals and plants do not have one. In other words, man is the master, and all the living organisms his slaves. The semitic religions thus gave man a supremacy of the material world, and to God the supremacy of the spiritual world. According to this concept, man is to be the victor and nature the vanquished. This man-centred philosophy of semitic religions has led to a lot of materialistic development no doubt, but at what ecological cost, the new paradigm for value-based development? The ancient Hindu concept, based on the theory of rebirth, views all creations as having a soul, a jeevatma, in different stages of spiritual growth and as progressing toward manushyajanma and thence to communion with God, the Paramatma; and in the true spirit of "Aham Brahmasmi", man himself can attain the status of a god. It forbids man from exploiting nature to satisfy his greed for wealth and pleasure; he can only draw from nature just what is required to sustain him, in other words to satisfy his basic needs and no more. As all members of a society are not equally knowledgeable, it may be that we have to rely at the same time on the old useful myth of

divine retribution to the erring on the one hand and to the modern concept of ecology on the other; evolution of a judicious blend of both would be even more advisable.

The ability to change, to urbanize, and to modernise is not the same for all societies, religious groups, and cults; some take readily to modernisation whereas others at the other end of spectrum simply refuse to change. Conservatism and orthodoxy vary from religion to religion; Islam, for example, with its emphasis on one God, one Prophet, and one book argues that the last word has been said by the last Prophet and any aberration in word or deed to the shariat value system is blasphemy. Islam has thus permanently closed down its doors to any influx of alien religion, thoughts and values, as, according to it, what is enshrined in the Holy Book of Koran is Allah's own revelation to man and there is nothing more to add or modify. Hinduism, at the other end of the religious spectrum, is a universal faith that keeps all its doors and windows open, and accepts readily any teaching or thought that has eternal value. Hinduism has not only the ability to absorb into its soul all that is good from whatever be the source, but also a great degree of resilience because of its inner strength and openness. Lord Krishna, who is God Himself, tells Arjuna "Oh Arjuna, I have given you all the Brahmajnana, i. e., the knowledge of the Absolute; now it is up to you to critically review what I have told you and to accept only those that are acceptable to you". Implied in this, is the divine assertion and admission that even God's words are not final and any finality that we attribute to such words is to be the result of our own judgement. I like Hinduism most for this universalism and openness and for not treating man as the centre piece of creation which he is not.

Value systems vary not only according to the times but also from religion to religion and even from region to region. Polygamy, for instance, is permitted by Islam under special circumstances, but not by Christianity or Hinduism. In Tamil Nadu, in some Hindu communities, an uncle is permitted to marry his niece, i. e., sister's daughter and practically throughout India a man can legitimately marry his uncle's daughter both of which are unthinkable to a Christian. Legitimacy attributed to the value system involved in sexual relations of a community is probably based on self-interest of the community and its members. Marriage between close blood

relations (i. e., consanguinous marriage) is genetically inadvisable but is widely practised as it keeps the property within the family and ensures the inbred closeness of community. Families and communities that outbreed take to modernisation more readily than inbreeding ones.

Social taboos are imposed on members by communities to ensure protection of value-system held dear by them, but in the new consumerist culture such taboos are losing fast their relevance and are disappearing, though vestiges of them could remain in the collective consciousness of the community for some more time to come. Take for example, vices such as drinking, prostitution, communalism, and bribe taking. All these are now becoming more and more socially acceptable. Prostitutes are now fashionably called "commercial sex workers"; they are workers almost as socially acceptable and indispensable as are the headload workers. Communalism uses the garb of proportional representation and social justice to justify itself. Kerala, with all the gulf money flowing into it, has become a consumerist paradise. We buy about everything from the neighbouring States and neighbouring countries using this easy money and fuel inflation. Vast bulk of the inward remittances go into real estate, more so after stocks and shares have been found unsafe as instruments of investment following the scam. This has resulted in a big boom in land prices not only in cities but also in villages, and land is just not available for use to thousands of low and middle class families who form the vast bulk of the Kerala community.

The old value system of "caring for and sharing" with fellow members of the community is giving place to one of "cheating and annexing". The fear of God no longer exists; fear of law also is fast disappearing as there are many ways of corrupting the law-enforcing agencies, though in fairness it must be stated our courts, by and large, continue to be impartial. Corruption is rampant from the top to the bottom and it is now possible to lead very successfully and fashionably a lawless jungle life in metropolitan cities and difficult to lead a law-abiding, normal life. Seshan was my senior at Madras Christian College, Tambaram. We need thousands of Seshans to rescue this country from the abyss into which it has fallen. Governments have no time for all this because they have to pay a heavy price and be corrupt just to

stay in power. Political parties, as you know, are primarily responsible for the breakdown of our time-tested and cherished value systems; few political parties have contributed to good governance but nearly all of them have contributed to nepotism and corruption, some more than others. Politics, they say, is the last resort of the scoundrel. No, it is not the last resort but the only resort these days of the scoundrel. It is high time our politics became value based and people began to vote only people with character to power. This is because power corrupts, and power not based on values corrupts absolutely. The only organisations that can reverse this trend of decline in righteousness are the religious and spiritual institutions and voluntary agencies with a mission. They have an uphill task before them because the cancer is almost in its terminal stage and what we are witnessing today may be the death of a civilization.

K. G. Adiyodi

Inaugural Address by Prof. Dr. K. G. Adiyodi, Vice-Chancellor, Cochin University of Science and Technology, at the National Seminar on Values in Crisis at St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Alwaye on May 5, 1995, organised by Jeevadhara.

Moral Values and the Dynamics of Society

What form the problematique of this paper are the meaning of the breakdown of values, the mode of their breakdown and their relation to the dynamics of social change. Its central premise is the impermanence of values which change across bio-centrism, anthro-po-centrism and theo-centrism. Values may be phased out on the emergence of a new social system. But it is impossible to construct values that are entirely new. It will be possible only with the historically and culturally contingent ethics as an influencing component. What is dominant today is a most dehumanising capitalism which devalues all values. There is, however, hope in such new movements such as alternative politics, ecological movement, women's movement, dalit movement and others that seek justice to people and nature.

Whether or not the moral values play a causal role in the dynamics of social development is a debated issue in the history of philosophy. From idealists like Kant and Eckhart to process philosophers like Whitehead and Bergson there is an insistence on the transforming influence of the ultimate values which transcend ordinary feelings and desires. The social history for most of these philosophers unfolds the gradual advance of human beings towards the best of their values, thanks to the unfailing guidance of the sovereign 'power' of Universe that controls time. Despite the continued sustenance of rationalist realism over the years, the philosophical preoccupations with idealism were always substantial, and interestingly what we witness today is a phenomenal reassertion of the irrational. Ethics has once again become the major philosophical concern, probably because of the growing social anxiety over an alleged breakdown of values.

What do we mean by the breakdown of values? How do values breakdown? How is the phenomenon related to the dynamics of social change? These questions together form the problematique of this paper which is only an outline suggestive of a perspective for re-evaluating the historical and philosophical implications of the alleged crisis of values.

The central premise of the paper is that values are impermanent and that they change. Timelessness of values is imaginary and not historical. This is true of even the so called universal values such as love and kindness. Love of and kindness to all living beings are considered to be the highest virtues of human beings of all times, however rare it was everywhere. Any major social revolution either religious or political had in the past resuscitation of these highest virtues as its goal.

From age to age the humankind threw up great Saviours who sacrificed for the cause of universal love and kindness. Since Buddhism we have known love of the entire bio-sphere. Since Christianity we have known kindness of the extreme kind. Every major civilization seems to have constructed its own kind of kindness and love, which is not comparable always. The love and kindness of societies anterior to the times of the Buddha and the Jesus were different. They were true and total in their own ways. The love and kindness of a transcendental kind idealised in a bio-centric worldview as represented by the Buddha; the one idealised in an anthropo-centric worldview as represented by the Jesus; and the ones idealised in primeval theo-centric worldviews are all different from one another. The human sacrifice or animal sacrifice in an archaic culture was based on a kind of love and kindness, but sensible only within the theo-centrism. This would mean that even the transcendental form of values is not timeless and that it changes across bio-centrism, anthropo-centrism and theo-centrism.

Historically, the transcendental has always been a rhetoric base for the validation of ethical postulates that are social system specific and temporary. Love and kindness of the absolute kind understandable and desirable within our worldview constituted the rhetoric base for the validation of normative prescriptions in the pre-industrial social formations. Our worldview is still swinging between theo-centrism and anthropo-centrism, leaving the relationship between absolute values and the ethical postulates contradictory. This is the social contradiction carried forward to ethics. Contradictory social relations sought to be legitimised by the rhetoric of absolute values manifest themselves as ethical contradictions. However, absolute values as the goal or the collective desire contain the contradictions through a strategy of co-option.

In a social system of asymmetrical relations and entitlements, absolute values shall be but the ideal. In a society of inequalities and exploitation, one can be kind enough to the exploited. But the social system as such precludes the possibility of love and kindness of transcendental kind as its common feature since such absolute values in action would nullify the social system itself. Historically it is possible to maintain that certain values like love and kindness in their absolute form get emphasised during transitional crises. Nevertheless, once the social system is stabilised, the absolute form recedes and whatever form is possible within the social system prevails. What emerges is that the absolute form of love and kindness is beyond social system and the system bound values therefore would never be absolute and timeless.

The social system bound existence of values accounts for the phenomenon of value crisis. This would presuppose the breakdown of values along with social systems. History of social systems does vouch for the appearance and disappearance of values that were considered to be permanent under the ideological and juridico-political imposition of the respective social systems. This is not to suggest a structuralistic reductionism of the mechanical nature. It is not meant here as a neat scheme of one to one correspondence between the dissolution of social systems and the phasing out of values. There could be old values re-asserted in a new social system either in part or full. What is meant to be emphasised here is the impermanence of the values over long term periods.

It is well apprehended today that our society is encountering an amazing crisis in values. But there is no consensus about its causation. Is the alleged crisis an outcome of the fundamental transformation that our society is undergoing? May be, what is made out today as loss of values is symptomatic of the making of new values. Such a hypothesis extends itself to the assumption that a new social system is in the making and that the new values articulated by it are replacing the old. It could be true that the old values which we all respect are phasing out as a natural consequence of the emergence of the new social system. But are we supposed to maintain a masterly inactivity by keeping quiet to see the natural development? Can we keep waiting as teleological Hegelians who hope for changes according to the 'will' of the

Zeitgeist? What exactly is our role in the predicament? Should we dwell upon for ultimate resolutions through the intellectual means of transcendental Kantianism? Or are we to creatively intervene and shape a society free of contradictions, through the revolutionary praxis of genetic Marxism?

Before we identify our role, there are certain crucial issues in which we have to secure a certain amount of clarity. The first issue pertains to the basis on which our diagnosis of the breakdown of values, ethical crisis resides. What are the measures and parameters of our diagnosis? We have to be clear about what enables us to recognise the crisis. Are we guided by the values of the transcendental kind or are we inspired by certain normative prescriptions of the social system internalised by us? May be, it is highbrow humanism inherited by us through the enlightenment modernity that is working in our minds. However, the fundamental question is: are we struggling to revive certain values that were more ideal than historical? Or are we struggling to construct the values of our age?

If ours is an act of revival or restoration, we have to be self-critical and reflexive about what we cherish as values. We have to make sure that our attempts are independent of nostalgic compulsions and personal preferences. It is a strenuous effort to see whether or not we are out of the impositions of the social system we live, when we seek to revive values.

If the case is that of a struggle to construct new values, let us agree at the outset upon the fact that it is impossible to construct something which is totally new. We shall be able to construct values only with the historically and culturally contingent ethics as an influencing component. Human beings become baffled creatures when they struggle to transcend beyond contemporary limitations. However, this does not preclude the faculty to construct differences out of the old that eventually make the new. The difference becomes significant if the worldviews behind the values are separate and incompatible to each other. This would mean that the construction of new values with real difference from the extant, anticipates a worldview other than theo-centrism, bio-centrism and anthropo-centrism. It is indeed to profess to go beyond the good and evil that we have already known.

We have met with a predicament which methodological reflexivity cannot resolve. Living a social system of free wheeling capitalism which is fast obliterating local values and homogenising virtues, a global rhetoric hiding the de-humanising processes of capitalist social system, is becoming dominant. It is this process that has let loose a situation of ethical laxity and frivolity. There is no doubt that we have to combat it, but how? I have no faith in the modern philosophies that obviate the need of committing ourselves to ethics and action. Before we set out for fighting capitalism we should know what the system means and how it works.

A competitive system that necessitates the perpetuation of economic inequalities and exploitation, capitalism cannot but capsize the existing value foundation of our civilization. It requires 'values' of its own that are anti-values according to all worldviews so far known and normative yardsticks so far recognised. The most de-humanising system the world has ever seen, the capitalist world system divests the humankind of all that is underlying and significant as the vital core in the civilizations. It embodies valuelessness, to say from the point of view of bio-centrism or, to put it in another way, it devalues all values. It sustains itself through the material processes, transactional relations and social context that necessitate the incessant nullification and violation of accepted values.

What exasperates all humanists today is the ruthless invasions of capitalism on all accepted values. This is the situation that has made us anxious about the breakdown of values of our times. The causal relationship between the ascendancy of the capitalist world system and the breakdown of hitherto accepted values provides some clarity in deciding what to combat. The examples lie in the grassroots movements, alternative politics, survival struggles of marginal communities, ecological movements, women movements, dalit movements and so on that seek to secure justice to people and nature — the highest virtue that our society lacks or the system denies.

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Rajan Gurukul

Justice and Efficiency in Economy and Society: Contextualising Values for a Counterculture

Any value-based assessment of economy should be done within the general social context of a particular society or country. Since independence India has been following the Nehru-Mahalanobis model of development with emphasis upon socialism and public control of the commanding heights of economy. But it failed miserably since it could not achieve even its basic objective, that of eradication of poverty. The replacement of the socialist system with the liberalized economy also cannot be an effective solution since it cannot ensure just and equitable distribution in a society like that of India, with its complexities, differences and differing initial endowments of people. Both capitalism and socialism can be criticized from the view-points of the values of efficiency and justice. Hence the need for an alternative model of development in which both efficiency and justice are experienced by the people at the grassroots level. In an experiment at Kalliassery, a remote village in Kerala, India, the author finds an attempt at a counter culture centred on decentralization and people's participation, though it cannot be certified as a hundred percent success. Anyway the search for a new system should ensure that efficiency and justice are "felt" by the people at the grass-roots level so that they can rectify the system.

I

A major anthropological paradigm informs that humanness is best expressed in society.¹ Imagine cultural production; of music, art, literature or cinema. The creator, in the process of creation, draws not only from the immediate environment but also

1 To illustrate this point further let us quote from the writing of a Christian Theologian, Harvey Cox, who in his *Secular City* [Macmillan, New York, p. 6] says: "When man appears in history he is already a social animal living in a collective group. The social contract theories advancing personal rights can be seen as social myths with little grounding whatever in history. The tribe is the setting where man becomes man".

from the past. Though the creation will be stamped by the individual music-maker, artist, writer or director, it will go as part of a common heritage. Similarly, though the product will have its own intrinsic value, unless others are there to appreciate, it will have no social value. If it is true of cultural production, it is truer in the case of economic production. Products ranging from pins to airplanes and from mangoes to missiles are produced in and through collaboration. Even in a society in which market exchange has not developed, their use-value² is realised only when someone consumes them. In a market-exchange economy, the very existence of products is on the basis of commodification. In other words, production and distribution cannot be separated from their social setting.

If an economy is to be assessed on the basis of values, it should be done within the general social context. If the impact of the economy on a hinterland Indian village is to be assessed, it cannot be done within the same parameters chosen for modern big cities like New York, Tokyo or Bombay. Neither can it be assessed within the framework designed for the past; for the period of pre-emergence of industrialization. On the other hand, this argument also implies that the values selected for assessment of the economy have to be conditioned by social environment and situation. Therefore the search for "ideal" values have to start from the dominant economic paradigms in world today since they underline the social systemic nature of their basic organizing principles.

2 Use-value means value in use, market exchange is one in which things [or products, in this specific case, commodities] are exchanged through the medium of money; [non-market] exchange is one in which, things are exchanged for other things including money, intrinsic value is value in a product or thing by itself and social value is value perceived socially. A product becomes a commodity when it can be exchanged through any other medium in a general exchange or market. For instance, a coconut can be produced for consumption while it can be exchanged in a market for money with which any other things, products, or commodities can be bought and consumed. For definitions of some of these, See Alan Gilpin, *Dictionary of Economic Terms*, [Second Ed.], Butterworths, London, 1970, and for a discussion of some of these terms at a larger setting, Fernand Braudel, *Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism* [Trns. by] Patricia M. Ranum, The John Hopkins Press, Datmore and London, 1977, pp. 11-12.

II

Though there were numerous attempts at a 'middle path', like mixed economy, cooperative capitalism, polycentric communism, market socialism and at alternatives like Gandhism, the world is still dominated by bipolar divisions, when it comes to economic systems; that of capitalism and socialism. Recent failure of the 'really existing socialist systems' in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the proven adaptability and survivability of capitalism, had promoted the idea of 'the end of ideology'.³ Hegel himself saw the Germanic Society, soon after the eighteenth century thinkers started to conceptualise self-consciously the system in which they were living, as the highest product of human civilization.⁴ Neither Hegelian reasoning then, nor arguments of Daniel Bell now, are enough to reject socialism as a worthwhile system to look at. Since socialism originated as a critique of capitalism, as long as the logic of that critique can be rationalized, it has its relevance; whether the system built under its name survived or not.

The dominant paradigms are to be reduced to the basic values used to rationalize themselves. Such reduction is difficult because different conceptualizations of capitalism and socialism exist. Of the two, capitalism now made familiar all over the world, through the demand for structural adjustment, liberalization and economic globalization, can be reduced to the value of efficiency.⁵ It perceives the world of producers as having differing capabilities. This relative disparities in capabilities can be reduced and total efficiency of production can be achieved, if, free flow of productive capacities between and among them can be allowed. The neo-classical economic concept of general equilibrium and the Ricardian doctrine as well as the Hecksher-Ohlin-Samuelson argument of

3 Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, Free Press, New York, 1965, had anticipated this argument which has become widespread after the collapse of socialist regimes by couple of decades.

4 See for instance, Donald Philip Verene, *Hegel's Social and Political Thought: The Philosophy of Objective Spirit*, Harvester, Sussex, 1980.

5 Here efficiency means economic efficiency, a text book definition of which is that "in competitive conditions, the lower the cost per unit of output, without sacrifice of quality, in relation to the value of price of the finished article, the greater the economic efficiency of the productive organization", See Alen Gilpin, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

comparative advantage are more sophisticated versions of the same logic.

In the meantime the socialist paradigm both in its Marxian critique and in the various Marxist interpretations⁶ view the world of distribution as being constituted of persons of differing capabilities. The ensuing relative deprivation of some have to be remedied by fair and just distribution through social control. Whether the social control is exercised by price or market systems as prescribed by Oscar Lange or by large-scale industrialization and central planning as prescribed by Maurice Dobb⁷, both perspectives try to bring about just distribution of the benefits of production. The two paradigms viz., capitalism and socialism, can criticise each other for the relative lack of the values of efficiency and justice. Capitalism naturally emphasises production and socialism naturally emphasises distribution, the inevitable twin programmes in any economic scheme. They can go one step forward and argue that only if distribution is also free, could benefits of free production i. e., efficiency can be fully realised, or that only if production is also socially controlled, can the ultimate objective of socially controlled distribution i. e., justice be fully realised.

Since production and distribution are inevitable aspects of any economic system, the mutual criticism offered by the dominant paradigms can only lead to a zero sum game. If each of the paradigms is willing to adapt more of the criticism of the other, both can realize greater perfection. A more just capitalism and a more efficient socialism can eliminate most of each other's drawbacks. What this argument leads to is a startlingly simple conclusion; that the dominant economic paradigms are not mutually incompatible but, in reality can be mutually reinforceable. Particularly, capitalism's ability to incorporate structuring principles of socialism like public ownership of the means of production,

6 Marxian thoughts are those which can be attributed to Karl Marx himself. Marxist thoughts are interpretations and additions contributed by those who follow him. This distinction is now common. I am personally indebted to another Christian theologian, late Dr. Sebastian Kappen, who initially familiarized me with such distinction.

7 This difference in perspectives of two leading Socialist economists is only one among such many. See John E. Elliot, "Marx and Contemporary Models of Socialist Economy", *History of Political Economy*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Summer, 1976, p. 151-184.

social control over the conditions of production, cooperation and equitable distribution of profit, into public law goes to prove this. It also rejected those political aspects which were criticised by socialism, when modern legislatures where conflicting interests have their say, have been constituted.⁸ Among the various causes for the failure of 'really existing socialist systems' its relative failure to incorporate capitalist criticisms might have been very important.

The compatibility between the major paradigms can further be illustrated by going to their historical and philosophical origins. Both industrial capitalism and Marxian socialism can be traced back to the post-Renaissance positivist world-views. Though one adopted social contract theories of individualism and the other proletarian revolution as the premises of social change, both believed equally in an ongoing concept of unilinear progress. The belief in progress is not merely in abstract growth; but in concrete terms of production of more and more wealth. Without constant surplus accumulation through expansion of markets and through upgradation of production, and without continued reinvestment of that surplus, capitalism will collapse. Similarly, socialism anticipates that with increasing affluence, collective goods and free goods would increase as a percent of total output, thus increasing the proportion of the national plan that was not subject to validation and revision through market exchange, and reducing the extent of commodity production.⁹ In other words, central planning by itself is incapable of eliminating commodity production — the ultimate aim of full communism. For that, increase in production and in wealth are necessary. This can be further illustrated within the historical context of India; and particularly of Kerala, where colonial-capitalism, nationalist-socialism, communist-socialism, and now liberalized capitalism, all have had direct or indirect official sway.

III

Kerala, along with the rest of India came under the paramount power of Britain in late 18th century. In their attempt to pay tribute without adversely affecting the domestic surplus accumulation,

8 See S. Kappen, *The Future of Socialism and Socialism of the Future*, Visthar, Bangalore, 1992, pp. 21–22.

9 John E. Elliot, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

princely states here, encouraged agricultural and artisan production along with trade. For this purpose, a series of reforms were enacted in the nineteenth century which directly benefited tenant-farmers, artisans and traders; including the granting of peasant proprietorship. This was very much in the interests of these groups as well as of the monarchies who 'cooperated' with each other in the process of political centralization and state formation. These reforms along with the dictates of colonial-capitalism which required extraction of primary products through plantations, went a long way in extensive commercialization of economy. The settlement pattern and other factors also promoted intensification of the commercialization process, which had differing impact upon different communities, causing upward mobility among some, and downward trends among some others. The economically upwardly mobile communities tried to win over corresponding social status and for that purpose resorted to socio-religious reform movements and formal education, which reformed each other. The communities who had to face downward trends, also resorted to the same formula to safeguard their status.¹⁰

In other words, the socio-religious reform movements created the initial process of democratization. They went down the social hierarchy, and initiated discourses with ordinary members of different communities. On the other hand, they gave expression to the demands of ordinary community members too. While these

10 The points raised in this paragraph are based upon several studies. They are, P. K. Michael Tharakan, "Socio-Economic Factors in Educational Development: Case of Nineteenth Century Travancore", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 19, Nos. 45 and 46, November 10 and 17, 1984, pp 1913-1928, 1959-1967. P. K. Michael Tharakan, "Socio-Religious Reform Movements and Demand for Indications of Development: Thiruvithamkoor 1860-1930", in Alok Bhalla and Peter J. Bumke (eds.), *Images of Rural India in the 20th Century*, Sterling Pub. Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 1992. pp. 134-152; Tharian George K. and P. K. Michael Tharakan, "Penetration of Capital into a Traditional Economy: The Case of Tea Plantations in Kerala 1880-1950", *Studies in History*, Vol. 2, No. 2, n. s. 1986 pp. 119-129. T. M. Thomas Isaac and P. K. Michael Tharakan, "Sree Narayana Movement in Travancore. 1888-1939. A Study of Social Basis and Ideological Reproduction", *Working Paper No. 214*, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, 1986. K. N. Raj and P. K. Michael Tharakan, "Agrarian Reform in Kerala and Its Impact on the Rural Economy: A Preliminary Assessment", in Ajit Kumar Ghose (ed.), *Agrarian Reform in Contemporary Developing Countries*, Croom Helm and St. Martin's Press, London, New York and Canberra, 1983, pp. 31-90.

processes had stronger roots in southern princely states, in the northern parts where direct colonial rule persisted, nationalist policies took shape. Before and after the failure of the 1921 Malabar Rebellion, nationalist politics brought to the forefront, the demand for agrarian reforms, which were yet to be implemented in the North as in the South. The socialist and communist movements emerged in the 30's of this century, in the space left out by the inherent weakness of the socio-religious reform movements and nationalist politics. Since the socio-religious reform movements had to work within the framework of respective communities from which they originated, their activities were restricted mainly to the relatively forward groups who had organised earlier. Nationalist politics had also to respond first to the perceptions of the upper sections of tenantry, who organised at first, and neglected the demands of the relatively inferior-tenants and agricultural workers. Brilliantly exploiting these gaps the Communists rode to power in the 1957 elections to the first United Kerala State legislature, on the basis of an effective coalition of lower castes and lower classes.¹¹

Soon after assuming power, the Communists used that power to disseminate the benefits of social development like education and health further down the existing hierarchy. Access to and utilisation of these benefits were made feasible economically for the lower castes/classes, by introducing income distribution measures like land reform¹², minimum wages and public distribution scheme. Therefore, much of the credit for social or human development indicators found high among the population of Kerala, rests with the Communists. Though the opposing camp, mainly the Congress, differed with them in points of emphasis, there was no fundamental differences. Congress also worked within the Nehru-Mahalanobis model of development, with emphasis upon, nationalist socialism, public control of commanding heights of the

11 See T. V. Satyamurthy, *India since Independence, Studies in the Development of the Power of the State, Volume I, Centre-State Relations: The Case of Kerala*, Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1985.

12 See 'India', in *Human Resources Development: Effectiveness of Programme Delivery at the Local Level in Countries of the ESCAP Region*, Development Papers No. 16, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 1994, p. 121. [Original draft prepared by P. K. Michael Tharakan].

economy, import-substitution technology and self-sufficiency. The model could never achieve even its basic objective, that of eradication of poverty.¹³ The government's failure to implement comprehensive land reform — possibly the surest way to the creation of a home market for industrial production — pushed it to follow policies pampering big industrialists, big land owners and organized sector employees¹⁴; to the neglect, in spite of commitment to social welfare policies, of the unorganised sector. The industrialists, landowners and organized sector employees who came into the forefront of Indian mainstream, were not products of competition or free enterprise, but of government patronage. If it was true for India, it was truer for Kerala.

Right from the eighteenth century, government intervention, people's mobilization, and through both these factors, dissemination of social and development indicators was the pattern set in Kerala. With the implementation of comprehensive land reforms in 1970, the basis for further mass mobilization dwindled considerably. The fact that ever since the land grab movement of landless agricultural labourers in early 1970s, no such state-wide movement could be effectively organized, is proof enough for this. In such circumstances an inevitable dilemma faced by revolutionary movements everywhere had to be faced by the Communists in Kerala too. To change the world, one must organize. Organizations require bureaucracies. Once created, bureaucracies have interests which are not identical with the ostensible objectives of the organization.¹⁵ Though the communists widened their support by espousing the cause of the poor and the downtrodden, and by mediating locally felt demands, since they got integrated into national and global persuasions; their analysis got rephrased into attaining state power with which grand strategies of development can be implemented. As a result the initiative of the people from below got downgraded while the Party's role in bringing out

13 With around 30 per cent of the Indian population still living under the poverty line [*Economic Times*, 8th July 1992] the aim of income redistribution contained in earlier plans seem not to have been realised.

14 See Sudipto Mundle, "The Political Economy of Reform", *Current Policy Issues*, No. 20, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, N. Delhi 1992.

15 Immanuel Wallerstein, "Nationalism and the World Transition to Socialism: Is there a Crisis?", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1983, pp. 95-102.

development outcomes got upgraded. In this circumstance, the further dissemination of development indicators became the responsibility of the Party alone, and their distribution was largely confined to those sympathetic to the Party or those who are already organised strongly enough to attract attention and respect of the Party. Generation and distribution of development indicators under socialist and non-socialist regimes became highly centralised and prone to clientalism. Just as in the uneven capitalist system where the poor and the needy attach themselves as clients to the powers that be, they also attached themselves as clients under socialist rule too, not to individuals but to the Party.

Ever so many evidences can be cited for claims being made on behalf of the Party in everything ranging from better wages to workers to redistribution of surplus land. In spite of the Communists' consistent commitment to the poor, the differences between them and others got blurred. The major debating points are being reduced to the claims that we did it better when we were in power. The very anti-systemic nature of the so called socialist alternative got compromised. Nevertheless the important roles played by communists and nationalists in spearheading successful struggles against pre-capitalist formations cannot be denied. Even some who supported such struggles got disillusioned as the socially controlled, centrally planned model, failed to eradicate mass poverty at the national level and power inequalities at the State level. Early on the socialist model was tolerated because otherwise the capital necessary for investment was feared not to be able to be raised by private sector alone. Later on through several national and international experiences it was established that many sources of capital other than the state were available. Out of this realisation, the shrill criticism arose that the socialist model was grossly inefficient. There were several supporters for the logic of liberalization.

The logic of liberalization visualises increased commodity production and also the dissemination of the benefits of the increased production to wider and wider sections of the society. Whichever way it is phrased, it ultimately ends up as a percolation theory. Doubts can be raised genuinely about the feasibility of percolation in a society like that of India; with its complexities, differences and differing initial endowments of people. Supporters

of liberalization will suggest a safety net, outside the logic of economic reforms to solve the social costs of the economic gains. They nevertheless will believe that the economic gains of liberalization are far greater than its social costs.¹⁶ Therefore in our society where earlier economic programmes failed to make substantial gains for the poor and the marginalized, they may still adopt a new economic programme with very high probability of repeating the failure.

IV

Such a situation naturally invites criticism from the perspectives of the values of justice as well as of efficiency. Any potential beneficiary being denied access to benefits can challenge the system on the basis of justice. One step removed it can be challenged on the basis of efficiency as well. In a universe of potential producers (entrepreneurs, capitalists, landowners and workers) if a group is denied the chance to participate in the production process, because of their inability which is inherent to the state of their living, then that much production efficiency is lost to the total system.¹⁷ This is the basis of socialist criticism of liberalising the economy. As we have already seen, the replacement of the liberalized economy with the socialist system need not be an effective solution in the long run. It will prevent efficient use of wealth, resources and capital in the production process. It will also deny the element of justice in the long run, by its tendency to promote clientalism. If capitalism puts a restraint upon exchange entitlements on the basis of initial endowments, socialism will also do the same by imposing the demand for organization, not necessarily into movements or organisations, but even as pressure groups, as one among the initial endowments.

16 One set of studies which offer a comprehensive critique of the liberalization of the economy is a series of Institute of Social Sciences [ISS] Discussion Papers, of which two have already been issued, under the research project "IMF/World Bank Conditionalities: Economic Growth and Social Justice, with Special Reference to India". They are: M. A. Oommen, "Economics, Economy and the Market Friendly Paradigm", *ISS Discussion Paper*, July 1992 and M. A. Oommen, "The Political Economy of Globalization", *ISS Discussion Paper*, April, 1993.

17 See for a similar argument, Tapas Majumdar, "Investment in Literacy for a High Technology Society", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXIV, No. 29, July, 1989, pp. 1711-1715.

If capitalism finds that children's nimble fingers are better used for production of matches, fire crackers or carpets it will use them. To replenish necessary child labour, children will be kept illiterate. Logic of liberalization will argue that income from child labourers will also add to their wealth, which will in the long run lead to their social, cultural and economic improvement, which will result in their withdrawal from the labour market for alternate occupations, including schooling. First of all, our labour history do not support the realisation of such a scheme. Secondly, in the very long run, to quote Keynes, all of us are likely to be dead. Socialism, by its own definition, can intervene in such a situation only in terms of classes and class struggles. This leaves out effective intervention in a broad spectrum of human activity of struggles spelt out by Antonio Gramsci as Civil society, distinct from purely economic and state power-related. A priori belief in the inevitability of development from a situation of workers sharing the same position in the mode of production to that of being conscious of their interests as opposed to the interests of other classes, further confuse the issue.¹⁸ Several examples like that of Tribals, traditional fisherfolk, women in general and among them Kudumbi and Muslim women in particular can be cited as examples for this.

Clientalism, on the other hand, whether it be under capitalist or socialist government breeds a multiplicity of individualistic and pressure group activities including communalist organisations. Everything ranging from worshipping the deity and at the temple which are in the particular favour of a reigning Chief Minister, to providing commodities and services of particular interest to powers that be, are resorted to widely in a patron-client society. This invites complaints from those who are not able to win favours through such measures. Rhetorically one may suggest extension of such favours to the whole society, so that complaints and criticisms cease to exist; which is impossible in any system. What it means is that clientalism and its behavioural byproducts are inherent to both paradigms. What they can do, is to benefit mutually from each others' criticism and 'improve' performance. Yet, neither system will be able to eradicate the problem completely. For a solution we have to seek further.

81 S. Kappen, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

V

The search for the alternative has to start from the values of efficiency and justice, shorn of their abstractness as they are found in the major paradigms. They have to be concretised in the sense, that they can be felt and experienced by the people at the grass roots level. People in their everyday living and activities should feel efficiency in terms of necessary material production of basic amenities of life such as fresh air and water, food, clothing, shelter, health and education. Similarly justice should be realised in terms of non-exclusion from contributing to and receiving from the common good. The very logic of such concretisation implies that the scale of operation of these values is to be minimized. In other words, the approach envisaged on the basis of these values is to be implemented in a highly decentralised administrative unit. Additionally, for people to feel the outcomes of justice and efficiency, they themselves should be the principal actors. Development should not be done for them or done to them by others. It should be, to paraphrase Lincoln 'done by them, for them'.¹⁹

Throughout history, great minds have worked on alternative modes of conceptualization aiming at more genuineness through effective decentralization and by suggesting ways and means to refurbish sagging revolutionary fervor for movements initially committed to radical change. Gandhiji's Village Swaraj and Civil Disobedience, Mao Tse Tung's permanent class-struggle, Soekarno's New Emerging Forces, Rammanohar Lohia's permanent civil disobedience and Jaiprakash Narain's total revolution and the right to recall are some of these concepts. Inevitably the approach to be discussed here will follow these paradigmatic conceptualizations in parts. The Nayanar government which was in power in Kerala from 1987 to 1991 implemented a set of programmes meant to decentralise administration and to replace people's initiative in the centre stage of development, like the District Administration Bill, Campaign for Total Literacy, group farming in paddy agriculture and village level resource mapping. Though their potential cannot

19 This obviously is not an approach based upon the division between intervenors and those among whom intervention is to be made. For further details see, Majid Rahnema, "Participatory Action Research: The Last Temptation of Sane Development", *Alternatives*, Vol. XV, 1990, pp. 199-22.

be denied, they in their outcomes are at best a mixed bag.²⁰ They have generated only a half hearted decentralization and a politically loosely coordinated activism, dependent upon government programmes. But the approach to be suggested here will be upon one of these programmes with its particular features noted in a village panchayath.

Kalliasserry Panchayat²¹ in Kannur District along with 24 other villages initially implemented the resource mapping programme, with the official support of government agencies. The basic premises of resource mapping was the understanding that information about local resources are necessary for local level planning and plan implementation. Though mapping involves certain amount of technical expertise the task was envisaged to be undertaken by the combined efforts of experts and local people. There are four stages in mapping: 1) Voluntary mapping in which trained volunteers at the village level collects information on pre-arranged items and marks them upon maps; 2) Scientific mapping in which scientists themselves collect information on more technical matters and list them on maps; 3) On the basis of information collected, six types of maps to be prepared; and 4) developing an action plan for the development of village. In Kalliasserry all four stages are completed, and the necessary concurrence from several agencies — including private property owners — to implement the action programme has been ensured.

Among various programmes in the Action plan for Village development that are under different stages of implementation, two require special mention. Village youth are engaged in vegetable cultivation in privately owned properties, between major crops. This venture has many good features. Youngsters are helped to familiarize themselves with the primary function of agriculture, non-use of vital resource like land by private owners between crops is prevented, nutritional requirements of the

20 Olle Tornquist with P. K. Michael Tharakan, *The Next Left? Democratization and Attempts to Renew the Radical Political Development Project, The Case of Kerala*, NIAS Reports, No. 24, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen, 1995, pp. 99-101.

21 A limited number of reports and studies of this experiment are coming out. On 6th May, 1995, *The Hindu* carried a report. For basic details one can see *Parishat Vartha*, Vol. 17, No. 18, January 16-31, 1993.

villagers are met to some extent, self-reliance in production is realised to some extent, and there is a monetary gain to both the collective and individuals who participate. Similarly an *Akshara Vedi* or a school complex of 12 public schools in the panchayat, ranging from a vocational higher secondary school to elementary schools, was formed trying to qualitatively improve the teaching-learning processes, through resource sharing and through parents and or mothers and teachers organisations. The results of this experiment are highly testable.

Other programmes like an integrated energy plan by undertaking an electrical line survey and adoption of energy efficient smokeless ovens, a group of housewives supplementing their incomes by jasmine cultivation, and the attempt to prawn farm in a considerable marshy area, are all interesting experiments. Neighbouring Pinarayi village, with rich tradition of cooperative movements, have responded to issues and crises that arose, by cooperativising common activities. Now they have around 14 cooperatives some of them eminently successful. Kalliasserry is different from such style of response in the sense that their programmes are based upon a rigorous stock taking of resources and are well planned, and the concurrence of the majority of the people is behind them. In Pinarayi also support of the people may be behind them, but their programmes suffer from their tentative planning. But both of them stand in contrast to a highly government implemented programme like the Kuttanad Development Project in Alleppey and Kottayam Districts which has ended up in misery and suffering for various sections of the region. Though Kalliasserry shows signs of success it cannot be certified as a hundred percent success. Apart from individual failures within separate items within the action plan, it does not answer a major problem with regard to village level planning and plan implementation in Kerala. With 9 of the panchayath members belonging to CPI (M) and one to CPI, or with predominant leftist political opinion in the village, it does not have the problem of political polarisation. What happens if a similar programme is to be implemented in another village of clear cut political polarisation?

This and many other questions can be answered only when data from other villages experimenting with resource mapping and action plans for development are available. They are necessary for, if at all, we are to move from this isolated experience and the

approach based on it, to the next level of paradigmatical statements. Economic systems have a highly integrative characteristic. Therefore they are made out to be cultures, all consuming and comprehensive. Therefore to pose a counter to the predominant economic paradigms implies anticipation of a counter culture. To base the argument merely on an approach let alone a paradigm, is very inadequate. Still, it may be a good point to begin with.

VI

Let us now summarize the logic of the presentation made above. Since economic activities are rooted in social relations, any value-based assessment of the economy should start from the expanded context of dominant paradigms. Capitalism and socialism, the two predominant paradigms are organised on the structuring principles of efficiency and justice respectively. If critiques are to be offered, they should be on the basis of these two 'values' viz. efficiency and justice. Logically and empirically both the paradigms can be found to fall short of their own ideals. Structurally they are both attuned to accepting and thereby benefiting from their mutual criticisms based on efficiency and justice. But as economic systems, they can never completely get rid of their 'defects'.

This situation calls for a search for a new paradigm; once again on the basis of the 'old' organising principles of efficiency and justice. The new system should ensure that efficiency and justice are 'felt' by the people at the grass roots level; so that they can rectify the system, if it goes off the rail. Therefore in the new system, efficiency and justice are to be facilitated — as against the 'old' paradigms of capitalism and socialism in which efficiency and justice were ends in themselves — by decentralisation of administrative units and people's participation. If it is guaranteed, there will be a blend of ends and means. There is no empirical evidence to show but for a limited approach in one village. Since it is part of a regional level experiment cutting across different villages, enough data can be expected in due course for moving towards paradigmatical statements. Which ever way, if a break is to be made from the predominant paradigms, a new or counter culture has to be anticipated.

Ethics and Economics: a Case for Value-based Economics

The basic objective of this paper is to make out a strong case for reorienting modern economics towards ethical values. The author first traces the history of economics in the major traditions of the world until it evolved into a purely positive science. Then certain trends such as information revolution and information economy, human body shops, arms trade and criminalisation of politics are discussed in order to show how urgently necessary it is that economic science be ethically tuned.

Introduction

Modern Economics is described as the 'queen of all social sciences'. This shows the significance of Economic Science, inspite of it being the youngest of social sciences. It evolved into a 'science' only with the rise of industrial capitalism. More precisely, we may trace the history of Modern Economics in the publication of 'Wealth of Nations' by Adam Smith in 1776. However epistemologically, thoughts on economic issues are as long as human thinking itself. During the entire pre-history we could notice the alignment of Ethics and Economics. Though there are polemics among modern economists regarding the ethical dimension of Economic Science, the dominant trend of Mainstream Economics is more in the direction of positivism. This kind of an Economic Science, apparently seeming neutral, is in effect instrumental in legitimising the super-exploitation by a few privileged people in the world and the consequent accentuation of immiserization and de-humanisation of the vast majority.

Imperialism is the prevailing global economic order. It subordinates the masses of world's people to the dominance of capital. As a consequence of this immoral and asymmetric order, the poor and the vulnerable are confronting poverty, squalor and de-humanisation. Under the guise of 'positivism', mainstream Economics is bypassing this human tragedy. The hegemonic forces

of capitalism are now directing the global economy to an immoral direction. Some of the new theoretical constructs in Economics are intended to legitimise these emerging mal-economic trends. Unless this Economic Science is de-constructed and an ethically tamed new one is re-constructed, modern Economics (or better termed Political Economy) would just be a satanic epistemology once again to be worth calling 'mammonism', 'pig philosophy', 'bastard science' or 'dismal science'.

So the basic objective of this paper is to bring out a strong case for reorienting modern Economics with ethical values. In this paper we first trace the evolution of Economics from an integral part of Theology and Moral Philosophy to a purely positive science. Then we would discuss certain emerging economic trends from a moralist humanist perspective, showing the necessity and urgency of an ethical tuning of Economic Science.

I. Ethics of Economics: a Profile in Economic Historiography

In the pre-scientific history of Economics, Ethics played a dual role in the sphere of Economics. Firstly, one could discern an ethical dimension in the very conceptualisation of economic phenomena. The conception of 'just price' may be cited as an example. Secondly, ethics provided the criteria to gauge economic practices.

We may start our historiographic journey into the nexus between Ethics and Economics from the thoughts of ancients. All the ancient peoples like Chinese, Medes, Persians, Jews, Japanese, Arabs, Egyptians and Hindus had their own ethically de-limited economic perceptions. We may take the Hebrews (Jews) and Hindus (Indians) as two representative cases for a brief discussion.

The economic thought of both Hebrews and Hindus was expressed in rules of conduct, law etc. The economic topics put under rules and laws included occupations, agriculture, interest and usury, labour and wages, property rights, taxation, inheritance, weights and measures, adulteration, monopoly and the poor.

The Mosaic law forbade lending "upon usury", that is, at interest, it prohibited "usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury". This applied only to fellow

Hebrews, however, loans on usury to strangers being allowable. Mercy in case of loans to the poor was enjoined.

The security for loans was in the nature of a 'pledge' and there was some regulations concerning such pledges. One rule was: Thou shalt not demand as a pledge any of thy brother's necessities. Another was that one must not go into the borrower's house and take his pledge, but must let him bring it out; and if the borrower was a poor man his pledge should be returned before the night.

In order to avoid the alienation of property, there was also the prescription of the celebration of the sabbatic year (seventh year) and the jubilee year (fiftieth year). In the sabbatic year all debts should lapse. Similarly, in the jubilee year the entire property goes to its original owner. When the jews violated economic morality the prophets used to correct them. The case of Nehemiah may be pointed out as an example for prophets trying to reinstate economic morality among jews.

Now let us turn to the ancient Indians. Among the most striking regulations of the Brahmanic law also were those concerning interest and usury. Money-lending by the higher castes was closely restricted. Brahmanas and Kshatriyas could not lend anything at interest, acting like usurers, except to exceedingly wicked persons who neglected their sacred duties. "He who, acquiring property cheap, gives it for a high price, is called a usurer and blamed among those who recite the Veda." The Hindu law also set a maximum limit for interest payment. Interest stops at the death of a King. After the coronation of a new King the capital grows again.

Both Hebrews and Hindus also maintained certain commercial regulations to moralise trade. They also held a moral concept of 'just price'. These ancients kept a set of measures directed toward securing justice in buying and selling. They had careful regulations against false weights and measures and against adulteration. Provisions against speculation, monopoly and the like were even more significant.

The discourses of the great Greek Philosophers centred around the political economy of the city state. They were interested in things such as the good life, the just state and the happy man.

Ethics and Politics were intermingled and Economics was considered a handmaid of Ethics and Politics. We should also remember that the term 'Economics' is of Greek origin and it originally meant "the management of the household". Among the Greek Philosophers Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC) deserve special mention.

The main ideas of Plato are found in 'The Republic' and 'Laws'. Plato wanted the government free from all kinds of corruption. For clean administration he recommended 'communism' for the rulers. They must not have any property beyond what is necessary. They should live together and share common meals, like soldiers in a camp. And the strange thing is that they shared women too. According to Plato, the best political community is one made up of friends who share everything: women, children, and all possessions. Members of the ruling class will not be allowed to possess gold or silver, "that mortal dross which has been the source of many unholy deeds".

Plato also opposed 'usury'. He suggested ceiling on the amount of permissible wealth in order to reduce inequalities of wealth. He also stood against excessive commercialism. However, Plato legitimised 'slavery' as a natural institution.

Let us now listen to Aristotle. He may be considered the first analytical economist. He laid the foundations of the science: 'Economics'. The main economic ideas of Aristotle are found in his works: 'Politics' and 'Ethics'.

For Aristotle, State exists for the promotion of good life. But this goal can be achieved without 'communism'. The institutions of family and private property are essential to promote the economy. Aristotle considered private property much superior to communal property on the following grounds: (1) progress, (2) peace, (3) pleasure, (4) practice and (5) philanthropy.

Aristotle also was against the imposition of a ceiling on private property. He would rather plead for controlling the growth of population. If population is not controlled it would bring poverty and 'poverty is the parent of revolution and crime'. Nevertheless, Aristotle justified slavery by saying that some people were slaves by nature. So he regarded slavery as a natural institution.

Aristotle looked at the problem of exchange and value from an ethical angle. He was looking for a principle of justice in pricing and he found it in the 'equivalence' of what one gives and receives. Thus Aristotle formulated the concept of 'just price'. Like other ancient thinkers, Aristotle also condemned interest. Money was regarded merely as a medium of exchange.

Now we will make an overview of Medieval Economic Thought of the 'Scholastic Doctors', particularly St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). The Church, the Bible and Aristotle exercised a great influence on the life and thought of Middle Ages. Christianity exerted a profound influence on the life and thought of the times. The doctrines of Christianity were appealing to the poor and the oppressed. Christianity taught the universal brotherhood of humans. All were children of God the Father. So they were brothers. The principle of brotherhood and universal love struck at the very root of class distinctions. So it became difficult to defend the institution of 'slavery' which was part and parcel of Greek and Roman civilizations and thought. Slavery was considered a sinful institution. Christianity also taught the dignity of labour. This was in contrast with the Greek view that labour should be performed by slaves and menial workers. The New Testament counselled people to work with their own hands.

The concept of 'just price' and the prohibition of 'usury' were the two dominant economic ideas of the Middle Ages. In short, the medieval economic thought was based on the idea of 'justice'. St. Thomas legitimised the institution of private property as it is in tune with the law of nature. However, he permitted its regulation by the Government for common good and the owner should discharge his moral obligation of sharing the use of his possessions with others. The Old Testament notions of 'Sabbatical Year' and the 'Jubilee Year' were pointed out as the bases for Government regulations. In brief, like Aristotle, he suggested that property must be private in possession, but common in use. However, St. Thomas stood for charity and in the case of extreme necessity even theft was permitted. St. Thomas also justified moderate profits in trade on the grounds of support, charity, or public service. He also upheld the view of just price and condemned 'usury'.

Mercantilism and the Delinking of Ethics from Political Economy

During the Middle Ages, economic as well as political life were dominated by religion and ethics. But we find a remarkable change in the sixteenth century regarding the thinking and practice on matters connected with political economy. The thoughts of Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Jean Bodin (1520-1596) helped in divorcing ethics from politics. Machiavelli argued that what was ethically wrong could be politically right. The wide variety of mercantilist thinkers, also, more or less maintained similar views on economic affairs.

Mercantilism was considered practical wisdom. It assisted the maturing of market forces and put its emphasis on 'trade'. According to Mercantilists, commerce was the only productive economic activity and the engine of economic growth.

Capitalism, as an alternative economic system to feudalism, has its roots in Mercantilism. It facilitated 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' and the formation of a world system with centre-periphery division.

The Mercantilists were mainly a group of economic practitioners like Thomas Mun (1571-1641) of East India Company. They displaced Ethics from the sphere of economics and put forward the idea of maximising the acquisition of wealth as the core of "State making". During the period of Mercantilism political and economic nationalism emerged in Europe. Each nation-state wanted to rise up both politically and economically. Economic achievements were treated as the means of political power building. Economic power was gauged by the amount of bullion which a country possessed.

With the establishment of Mercantilism we find a shift in the class alliance of state apparatus from feudal land lords to traders. The state legitimised the acquisition of bullion even by immoral means. Mercantilists also validated the system of interest payment.

Ethics of classical Economics

Economics became a scientific Discipline by the intellectual efforts of physiocrats of France and David Hume and Adam Smith of Great Britain. However, Adam Smith is honoured as 'the Father of Modern Economics'. Smith studied Moral Philosophy at

Glasgow University and started his career as a professor of Moral Philosophy in the same University. His first book was on Moral Philosophy entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in which he legitimised value judgments on the basis of 'sympathy'.

By the time of Adam Smith, Europe, particularly Great Britain, started showing the symptoms of industrial capitalism — like accumulation of capital by the emerging industries, employment of wage labour, and expanding internal as well as foreign markets. But the interventionist policy of the Mercantilist state did not provide the economic environment for the full blossoming of the emerging capitalist forces.

Adam Smith identified 'Market' (the invisible hand) as the prime mover of the economy. He discerned the rise of an economic system centred on 'market' with its own independent sphere of existence, alienated from the political system. The new economic perception of Smith imparted a mortal blow to the Mercantilist notions and it paved the way for free trade and industrial capitalism.

Smith did not find any ethical conflict between the emerging economic system and society. He identified human selfishness as the motive force behind all economic enterprises. His discovery of 'homo economicus' — 'the rational economic man' was perfectly in agreement with the 'critical rationality' perception of the enlightenment era. Adam Smith observed that the (enlightened) selfishness of man would be regulated by 'market mechanism'. So there is nothing to be worried about 'selfishness'. Through market's intermediation the interest of an individual falls perfectly in harmony with the society. So there need not be any conflict between the private individual interest and the social interest. Later classical economists broadened and deepened the perception of Smith.

Marxism: The Perspective of an Ethical Order in Socialism and Communism

Though epistemologically, Karl Marx did not heed to Moral Science, through his dialectical materialistic historiography, in effect he exposed the immoral and fluctuating nature of capitalism. Of course, he considered capitalism as superior to feudalism because of its advanced forces of production. But he also detected the exploitative and inhuman relations of capitalism. According

to Marx, capitalism is bound to collapse because of its contradictions and it would be replaced by humane socialist system which might finally become communism where all class feelings fully evaporate. The economics of socialism and communism would be perfectly in agreement with its ethics also.

The Neo-classical Polemics on the Ethics of Economics

Most of the neo-classical economists conveniently by-passed Marxian political economy or economics. Nevertheless, one could notice a long discourse between the members of the same school on the ethical dimension of Economic Science. While economists like Alfred Marshall, A. C. Pigou, J. M. Keynes and some others stand for an ethical string attached to Economics, many modern economists like Lionel Robbins and Milton Friedman strongly oppose such a view. They treat Modern Economics purely as a positive science, free from 'value loading'.

Farewell to Ethics in Economics: The Recent Trend

Though there are still economists like Amartya Sen strongly advocating the nexus between ethics and economics, mainstream economics is geared more in the positivist trajectory. Modern capitalism is now inflicted with an unusual disease called 'stagflation'. The new liberal economists blame Marxism and Keynesianism for this illness and they formulated a set of new economic theories like New Monetarism, Supply Side Economics and Rational Expectations Hypothesis; all with a prescription of market friendly economic policy to the state. Reaganism and Thatcherism emerged out of these theoretical 'currents'.

The spirit of these theories has been imparted to Development Economics in the so called 'New Liberalism in Development Paradigms' by economists like Jagdish Bhagwati, T. N. Srinivasan, IMD Little and many others. The two main pillars of the new development paradigm are Market Relaxation (MR) and State Compression (SC). The Trans-national Corporations — the main actors of modern imperialism — cunningly employ this theory through the unholy Trinity — IMF, IBRD and WTO — to legitimise the so called Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to engineer their vested interests at a terrific human cost of the fragile people of the Third World. The new paradigm might be helping the

Transnational Corporations and their elite supporters in the More Developed and Less Developed countries. As an integral part of its market structuration, the new global capitalism is engaged in the displacement of traditional noble values of developing countries with the necessary consequence of a value crisis in them.

With the new communication revolution and the domination of finance capital, the international economy has become one of a gambling one. Academic Economics entertain this sort of a dangerous trend by placing the so called game theories on a higher plane. In recent years, most of the nobel prizes in Economics have been secured by the game theorists. But what is the moral lesson economists have to learn from such happenings like the breakdown of Barrings, the Harshad Mehta episode, the Mexican crisis and the like?

II. Some New Economic Practices Calling Forth Ethical Evaluation

From the moral and ethical perspective some detrimental trends have emerged in the economic practices of modern world. Now we intend to make a brief account of this trend.

1. Information revolution and information Economy

The technology of information media is changing at an accelerated pace. It has great ethical and economic implications. It creates new values and cultures to facilitate the vested commercial interests of TNCs. The media is now instrumental in disempowering the masses of world's people. The new information revolution has made the whole world a 'global village'. In this 'village' the poor people are disarmed and made helpless by information imperialism. An ethical value judgment of this sort of a situation demands the development of an alternate media serving the interests of world's poor people.

2. The Ethics of human body shop

Modern genetic engineering and bio-technology have opened a new biological market, mainly for human body parts. The recently exposed racket in South India dealing in Kidney trade could show the immorality of even some medical practitioners. 'Surrogate motherhood' may be treated as an economic proposition; but it cannot claim a moral basis. The recent experience of such

a big, apparently noble research project like the Human Genome Diversity Project reveals the moral plight of commercially oriented scientists engaged in Research and Development. All these show the urgency of a moral code to our scientific personnel. The new TRIPS under WTO would not assist in upgrading the moral status of world's scientists. For that alternative socially oriented ethical codes are required.

3. The (un)Ethics of arms trade

In value terms, arms constitute the major item of international trade. When millions of people die every year in developing countries due to hunger, the richer countries like America have so structured the poor ones in such a way that they set apart a major portion of their state revenue to buy arms from the Transnational arms sellers. When ordinary people are dying for lack of food, their security is guarded by piling up arms! The ethical values of modern governments have fallen to such an extent that in most cases these imported arms are being used to suppress the democratic expressions of one's own people.

The so called Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed by IMF and World Bank demand pruning the economic activities of the state. But it is a paradox to note that while the state apparatus is retreating from most of its economic activities, the defence budget is consistently rising.

Unless the people of the world are conscientised and empowered, exploitation of the hegemonic classes through war efforts would persist. Let us pray and work for a world without wars. Promotion of world peace is very essential to avert the entitlement breakdown of the poor and the vulnerable in the world.

4. Moral deterioration of global trade

An ethical audit of the structure and direction of world trade also gives shocking informations. The growing trend of such items in global trade like toxic wastes, narcotics and stimulants and ill cultural entertainment products, particularly to the Third World exemplify the breakdown of value system in global political economy and society. Unless social resistance is strengthened the developing countries will soon become the dumping yards for the toxic wastes of the developed world and through cultural imperialism the dependency — domination relationship would be

perpetuated. The newly formed WTO would be the police to protect this sort of an immoral inhuman global trade.

5. Criminalisation of politics

Politicking has become a commercially oriented occupation. Large number of criminals are being recruited in this sector. The recently published Vhora Committee Report may be cited as concrete evidence for this. An immoral politics cannot cater to a moral economy. Again, people had to be relieved from the clutches of nasty politicians. Through their political power they should weed out all the criminals from the polity. Then only the state apparatus could approach creatively in solving the vexing economic problems of the ordinary people.

Conclusion

In this paper first we made a cursory glance at the nexus between Ethics and Economics in pre-capitalist times. During those times a sense of 'economic justice' prevailed and economic decisions were tempered by moral persuasions. Economics, then was only a handmaid of Ethics. But with the rise of capitalism, particularly when 'market' was established as an economic institution, the chord between Ethics and Economics was broken. A dominant stream in Modern Economics claims that science is perfectly free from value loading and it is a positive science 'neutral between ends'.

A major observation of the paper is that most of the recent economic practices are highly immoral. Current Theoretical Economics, apparently claims neutrality; but in effect supports the unethical practices. The recently well acclaimed game theory may be cited as an example. It only helps to cement a gambling world economy. The challenge before Economic Science is more an ethical question — the rampant poverty among the masses of people! So Modern Economics has to re-orient itself ethically as an instrument of correction, rather than legitimising the unethical economic practice. In fine, if Economic Science is for human betterment, then it has to be driven by ethical and moral values.

Contradictions in Moral Praxis Today

Some random reflections

The Crisis in moral values today is that, as a result of modernization, traditional values are being replaced by a new set of values, particularly an overweening ambition for unattainable goals; the supreme value today is self-aggrandizement, this too on a global plane. It has infected education, and even health services. Crisis management through short term remedies will not work. A revolutionary restoration of values with a new philosophy of life is necessary.

Humanity today is passing through an unprecedented crisis. In the discussions of this crisis it is often said that there is at present a total breakdown of moral values in our society which is borne out by factors like the escalation and intensification of violence in all departments of life, rampant corruption, promotion of inhuman competition often between quite unequal partners, rationalisation of indiscriminate exploitation (of humans and materials) and domination etc. This short paper, as the title indicates, does not propose to attempt an indepth analysis of the crisis, but intends only to highlight certain contradictions in our moral praxis assuming that these contradictions are but the natural consequence of a conflict of values.

What do we mean by crisis of values? Is it an absence of values to guide our conduct? Or does it mean that what were traditionally held as values have lost their potency and efficacy and have thus become dysfunctional? Or is it only a condition of values in transition? After all, some hold that values are only situational and uprooted from their socio-economic sub-structure they become meaningless; they wither away. If so, is what we witness today a crisis emanating from a change in the infra structure which supported a certain set of values? There are yet others who argue that values are eternal, though norms derived from values are transitory. Norms that guide and govern human interactions and praxis may and do change but not values, goes their argument.

Without going into the merits of the above arguments, it can be said that life cannot exist and persist in a (value) vacuum. If one set of values or norms derived therefrom becomes obsolete, it will be replaced by another useful set in due course. But this process is not an easy exercise that takes place smoothly as a matter of course in social change. There will be frictional problems during periods of transition but gradually the social system, either after internalizing the new set of values fully or after rejecting them and falling back on the old set of values, attains its equilibrium.

Values as individual and social goals call for appropriate means for their realization. Some of these means get institutionalised in course of time. Normally there will be no contradiction between the goals and the institutionalised means devised for their attainment. In fact, crisis in the value-system originates when there arises contradiction(s) between the values and their means; in other words when institutionalised means fail to achieve the desired goals. Quite often we come across instances where the means prove counter productive and negate the underlying values most blatantly. Translated into sociological terms a state of anomie sets in (as explained by Durkheim and Merton), i.e., a disjunction between moral values and institutionalised means. Technically anomie refers to the absence of guiding or governing norms, the state of rulelessness, deregulation or social anarchy. Social chaos, moral confusion and disintegration of value system are marks of anomic society.

There are sociologists who argue that the crisis in modern times is the result of the failure of the capitalist praxis to satisfy the artificially created needs. There is, no doubt, a strong point in the argument that the present crisis is essentially a conflict between capitalist values and capitalist praxis (see S. Kappan, *Jeevadhara*, 25, Jan.-Feb. 1975) for it widens the gulf between expectation and fulfilment and thus sows the seeds of frustration in society. Though the situation mostly in the third world countries comes well within the ambit of this interpretation, it does not explain fully the complexity of this crisis; it warrants closer scrutiny.

The contemporary world situation presents a different scenario. As a result of modernization traditional values are being displaced by a new set of values that emphasises humans' unlimited desires and their overweening ambition to achieve unattainable

goals. The supreme value in the value system of the modernization paradigm is self-aggrandizement. It consists in the relentless pursuit of power, position and profit and gearing up production mainly to profit making. Consequently money has been consecrated as a value in itself. As Merton has pointed out there is no stopping point in the dream of a paradise of material plenty and the emphasis on success goals has become an internalised value. Nothing succeeds like success — the Machiavellian dictum — is the modernist motto and in the mania for success, questions like whether legitimate means are emphasised and whether such means are available to all members of the society are either ignored or considered redundant. Thus the value praxis correlation is underestimated and even undermined. It must be pointed out here that the protagonists of these values are making very effective use of all the media of communication for manipulating the internalization of these materialistic values.

The process of globalization let loose on the world along with the undisturbed free play allowed for the market forces has brought about drastic changes, not only in the consumption pattern of larger segments of people in countries like India, but also in their attitudes and outlook on life. The spectre of affluence is haunting them like a passion giving rise to a very paradoxical situation. On the one side there is speedier internalization of the values of modernization by an enlarging constituency comprising especially of students and youth, and on the other there are visible signs of fatigue in the realms of affluence and people are getting frustrated with physical enjoyment and success goals. As Simon and Gagnon point out, today effective means for the achievement of goals are available to more and more sections of the population even in the countries of the South and therefore, it is not the gulf between expectation and fulfilment but the commitment and the gratification to be derived from the achievement that becomes problematic. The pre-modernization social order inculcated in the individuals a strong desire for culturally defined success goals but blocked their attainment by structural barriers. Modern society, on the other hand, not only makes promises but proceeds to provide them to larger numbers of people. But it is pointed out (Simon and Gagnon) that as these objects or experiences that were highly coveted earlier have become easily available, they have become unspectacular and have lost much of their old glory. Thus

with the growth of affluence the significance of ownership of objects has declined and the demystification of success has grown more general.

The above scenario lays bare the basic paradox of the modernist praxis, which follows the conventional logic of paradox that every intended action has its unintended and unpredictable consequences. If in the pre-modernization paradigm the crisis was due to the conflict between the value and the praxis, in the modernization model the praxis equipped with the most efficient technologies has succeeded in achieving some of the goals but has also produced unintended and unexpected results. Sociologists designate this trend as the anomie of affluence. This paradox of the modernization praxis adds a new dimension to the crisis we confront today and calls for a fresh look at its valuational aspects. Equally significant is the paradox we witness in situations where the institutional means produce contrary results negating the values expected to be achieved by them. The areas of our moral praxis where this trend manifests itself most poignantly are education and health care.

Most of our educational institutions and health care centres are based on a value system that may be called traditional (in the sense of the pre-modernization era), which emphasised the values of truth (honesty and integrity), freedom (from all bondages) and goodness (justice and selfless service). Education was viewed as a liberative process (*sā vidya yā vimuktayē*) which would free human beings from all bondages and train them for the realization of the ultimate purpose of life. Consequently the educational structure was in keeping with the values underlying it. But today under the onslaught of modernization the long cherished values are severely battered and speedily displaced by the new set of values. Education is being converted into a subsidiary of the larger industrial-military complex, making it the medium for fitting the human for success in a socialised industrial existence. Education will thus serve as the spring board of a new regime steeped in the values of self-aggrandizement and profiteering. The confusion we witness in the educational arena today is the inevitable result of the battle between two sets of conflicting values. On the one side we have the traditional values and their protagonists while on the other we have an array of aggressive modernizers and the

values they espouse. The irony of the situation is that the educational system we have today was conceived and designed within the traditional framework but now it is being used to serve entirely new purposes basically different from what was originally intended to achieve. In this situation contradictions are bound to occur. A praxis based on moral values and intended to translate those value goals into reality is used to propagate and promote non-moral and materialistic values. Disconcerting though it is to note the ominous signs of modernization steam-rolling all opposition and heading for a winning spree, there are signs of hope in the well-meaning experiments in alternate education attempted all over the world and in the stiff resistance offered in the form of valuational critique of the new education policies.

There was a time when, throughout the world, healing was viewed as a ministry. In the west, until the Enlightenment there were three categories of healers viz., the Church, the lay healers (who were mostly women) and the trained physicians. But soon laws were enacted making university education legally essential to practise medicine and thus university trained doctors gained monopoly over treatment. With the advent of the germ theory of disease the focus of disease causation shifted from the social conditions that bred diseases to the immediate cause — the germ and this opened up the possibilities of devising specific remedies which gave a boost to the manufacture of medicines. Business persons found a potential business area in the field of medicine and thus a link was established between medicine and business which exerted a decisive influence on the content of medical practice. The ministry of healing was converted into "medi-business" where the presiding deity is the spirit of commercialism.

The Indian medical system known as ayurveda had developed a wholistic approach to health based on the perennial values of living in harmony with Nature, simplicity, renunciation and service. It has even been argued that all the great values, held aloft by Indian culture are best exemplified in her indigenous system of medicine, i.e., ayurveda. The medical practitioner — the vaidya as he was popularly known — considered himself a servant of the people and looked upon his profession as a means of serving the people. But with modern medicine came the commercial values on which it was based. Although the intentions of the pioneers

who introduced Western allopathic system into the third world countries were beyond suspicion, it must now be admitted that they were unaware of the fact that the very perceptions on which this system was based were antagonistic to the altruistic values that motivated them. Nevertheless, the contradictions became apparent soon and today the ethos of modern medicine has permeated even the traditional systems making them a travesty of the healing ministry. It may be said that it is in the health care system that we witness the worst contradictions in our moral praxis. By acting in blatant contravention of their foundational values our hospitals contribute substantially to the perpetuation of the hegemony of modern medicine in health care and thus add considerably to the crisis of values.

Isn't there a way out of the impasse? How to eliminate the contradictions in our moral praxis? These are pressing questions that should engage our serious attention for the situation calls for prompt remedial action. But the remedial measures shall not be a make-shift granting only a respite from the agonies of contemporary experience. Most of the solutions suggested by social analysts are short-term remedies and they smack of crisis-management. What is truly required is a sure and safe method of putting life back on the right track.

While devising such a method we must show proper sense of realism; we must be extremely clear about the nature and gravity of the crisis we are planning to resolve. As the crisis we confront is multi-dimensional encompassing all aspects and areas of life, the solutions we offer should be capable of addressing the multi-faceted complexity effectively. It means that compartmentalised approaches which do not take a total field view of life are bound to fail. In fact, the chaos and disintegration we witness in the contemporary world is to be attributed to a deliberate dismissal of the truth of the oneness of life from our perceptions and dividing life into water-tight compartments. Consequently each compartment was elevated to the status of autonomy and independent rules were framed for regulating the activities of each segment. This kind of division is bound to make life a conflict zone where one aspect of life will inevitably contend against the other(s). So a way out of the crisis is possible only if we learn to look at life differently and see things differently. It means developing a new

philosophy of life, a worldview that is wholistic. As Gandhiji has made clear developing or accepting a wholistic worldview presupposes a total rejection of the modernization paradigm with its worldview and not merely scrapping it off its hallmarks like commercialism and economic barbarism.

It has to be made clear that improvising or instituting a few checks and balances within the existing framework will not help in removing the underlying causative factors and in eliminating the contradictions that plague our moral praxis. This calls for a two pronged approach.

Often moral contradictions manifest in the form of injustices and evils. Any serious attempt to resolve these contradictions can assume the form of remedial action for the removal of these evils and injustices. Care should be taken to ensure that the method of fighting injustices does not generate further injustice and turn out to be self-defeating. Gandhiji's insistence on non-violence especially on the aspect of self-suffering while resisting evils exemplifies this point. By offering active non-violent resistance — satyagraha — we will be able to save our moral praxis from degenerating into a value-negating exercise and restore to it its original function.

In a wider sense, saving our moral praxis from contradictions is an exercise in value restoration which in turn calls for evolving a new philosophy of life as pointed out earlier. This, in fact, envisages a new revolution conceptually and methodologically different from the kinds of revolutions familiar to us. As Sri Aurobindo says (in *Thoughts and Glimpses*) the world has known only three kinds of revolutions — the material, the intellectual and the moral, and the changes we see in the world today are physical, intellectual and moral in their ideal and intention. And one cannot but agree with Sri Aurobindo when he says that in order to transform the world and life in it we require a spiritual revolution. 'All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised'. One must hasten to clarify here that true spirituality is not the rejection of life but the art of bringing perfection in life. According to Sri Aurobindo there are indications that the modern age — the age of industrial, commercial and economic barbarism — is progressing to its culmination and end and that the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws up its waves here and there. It is incumbent

upon all those who are truly concerned about the future of humanity to identify the waves of this new revolution and ensure its consolidation not only through personal asceticism but through effective networking of well-meaning individuals and action groups, nationally as well as internationally. Otherwise all interpretations of the present happenings and forecast of humanity's future would be vain exercises. The number of those who are prepared to take up the challenge will not be large, but number does not count much here. As Gandhi said: "A small band of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history". Therefore, though a minuscule minority, the concerned and committed ones must act in full faith, confident that one day "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain ..." (Isaiah — the Bible). The resolution of the contradictions in our moral praxis depends to a very great extent on our willingness to take up the challenge and act as God's fools.

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Value Crisis as reflected in Literature

Literature questions the current value system. The contemporary world has fallen away from the moral teachings of World Religions. Malayalam Literature of the Nineteen forties and fifties, irrespective of the political and ideological affiliations, raised its voice against the injustices and corruption in the caste and class-ridden society. But in the sixties and seventies the crisis led to the development of an existential philosophy in literature negating the traditional values. What is the remedy? We shall wait for the advent of the Messiah, which will not, we hope, be in vain.

Nothing is literature unless it questions the value-system of a given milieu. Over the ages different societies have evolved different value-systems which they thought would sustain them and help them achieve progress. These systems are by no means identical, and as such it is hard to maintain that they have all sprouted from one and the same transcendental source. However, most of these systems sought validation from some 'Śrīthi' or 'Śabda' of divine origin. World religions like Hinduism, Christianity and Islam have values laid down in their holy texts, they are theo-centric values. On the other hand Lao Tse, Confucius and the Buddha have based their concepts of values on their deep understanding of the human and nature; those are anthropocentric. Karl Marx's approach to ethics was both scientific and materialistic. He dispensed with the transcendental dimension of values. Philosophically, the western concept of values is based on the Platonic ideas of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The Indian sages stand by *Sathyam* (Truth), *Sivam* (Goodness), *Sundaram* (Beauty).

They are as transcendental as the Thomist concept of the eternal unalterable moral law. But these concepts are 'ideals' hardly applied in their naked loveliness and grandeur to social or political life as is confirmed by society. It was only natural therefore that in all societies there grew a wide chasm between the great ideals of their faith and the value-systems they evolved. Imperfect as

these systems were, in practice people could hardly be loyal even to these value-systems. Writers in all ages have fumed at this disparity and responded to their social situations either with anger, or with sorrow or in despair. According to P. B. Shelley poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the humankind. From their perspective and from that of the idealists there is a deplorable decline in moral standards, and marked deterioration in the values of life. Not all of them are religious or even moralists. They have an inner sense of the 'ought' situation which they contrast with the 'is' situation. The great teachers and philosophers have enumerated the high values of life, and we too have our dreams about them. The highest of human virtues, truth, love, compassion and a new earth that realizes them are in our dream — Vylloppilly Sreedhara Menon writes,

"Our brilliant imaginations, with a firm faith
Leap from the days that are gone, into a
world that is yet to dawn"

And that is a new earth. A keen awareness of the wide disparity between the 'ought' situation and the 'is' situation takes the writer into the very heart of the value crisis, and he expresses it in images and symbols and in rhythms that captivate his readers and move them either to anger or to sorrow.

Malayalam novelists, short-story writers, dramatists and poets of independent India are acutely aware of the value system as it is in theory, and its desecration in practice. In the forties and fifties writers committed to social progress, drew inspiration from Marxism. The progressive literature movement carried with it a number of seminal writers who fought for social justice through their writings. To many, Marxism was a creed of violence; also Marxism openly taught that end justifies means. Yet its humanitarianism was a corrective to the corrupt value-system that justified the oppression of the have-nots of the world. Marxism had a clear concept of social values and a workable programme to liberate the workers and the poor held in chains from time out of mind. The Marxists urged the 'have nots' to unite and fight for political, economic and social freedom. Not all the writers of the forties and fifties endorsed the programmes of the communist party; but everyone was profoundly concerned with the liberty of classes of people held in slavery for generations. The poets of the period were enthused with a zeal for justice irrespective of their political

convictions. Vallathol, Changampuzha, G. Sankarakurup, P. Bhaskaran and a host of others hailed the socialist revolution of Soviet Union and exhorted the people to work for social equality and justice. Edasserry asked the workers to "reap power before they set out to reap the harvest". P. Bhaskaran's 'Vayalar Garjikkunnu' stirred the people to fight against oppressive structures. The writers of the period dealt with some social problem or other in their writings. P. Kesav Dev, S. K. Pottekkad, Thakazhy Sivasankara Pillai, Mohammed Basheer, Lalithambika Antharjanam, and Uroob strongly pleaded for social justice and individual freedom. Not all the writers were Marxists or Marxians. Whether Marxists or not they loved the human and upheld human values in their writings.

It was with the end of the Nehru Age that the value-crisis brewing in the social ethos for a time developed a negative philosophy of its own and surfaced itself in creative works in the various Indian languages. It was obvious that something went awry somewhere. Our democracy as it worked out, supported by a dehumanising bureaucracy bred a number of social evils. As Gunnar Myrdal wrote, the Asian set up including the Indian milieu became hot-beds of corruption, nepotism, deceit, and exploitation. As acquisitive tendency grew beyond proportion moral scruples were thrown to the wind. Gandhiji's love of truth and nonviolence and Nehru's 'soaring idealism' gave place to a practical and mercenary approach to society. This led to the corrosion of the value-system which Gandhiji had envisaged for modern India. The assassination of John P. Kennedy and of Martin Luther King Jr. made it clear that violence was on the rampage in society. It was the stage-setting action for an age of terrorism soon to emerge in societies all over the world. The cold war between the western and eastern blocs struck fear in the minds of people both in the west and in the east. Fundamentalism posed a menace for the creation of secular societies. In India the prevalent economic system undermined the dream of the socialist republic.

Politics bereft of humanity made a mockery of the directive principles of our constitution and deprived our democracy of its high ideals. Conscience did not make any one a coward as Hamlet thought. God had, as it were, no role to play in the modern society and as the protagonist of Sartre's 'Devil and the Good Lord' says everything became permissible in our milieu.

The tottering of the moral code and the shattering of the value-system created in India a cultural vacuum congenial for the spread of existentialism. Most of the writers of the sixties were conversant with the works of Kafka, Camus, and Sartre. They began to feel that there was no ultimate being or goodness that would sustain them. A great Indo-Anglian writer like Raja Rao could achieve a viable equation between the 'Maya Vada' of Advaita and the 'nothingness' of existentialism. In Malayalam, O. V. Vijayan evolved an indigenous philosophy of nothingness in his novel *Khasakkinte Ithihasam*. Its chief character Ravi is nihilistic in his outlook. With stark insensitivity he has promiscuous sex with the women of the village and he drinks without any restraint. In most of his novels a writer like Anand found the Kafkasque view of life adequate for reflecting the ambiguous ethos of Kerala of the post Nehruvian period.

Kakkanadan and Mukundan wrote novels portraying the frustration rising out of the negation of traditional values and a sense of the futility of existence. To take one instance Kakkanadan in the novel "Sakshi" paints for us Narayanankutty, a self-exile, callously indifferent and totally insensitive to traditional values and normal human sentiments. Like many a young man employed abroad, Narayanankutty rushes home on a short leave to see his father breathe his last. He is bored with waiting for the demise of his father though he gives others to understand that he is profoundly grieved. For diversion he moves out and has sex with an old flame of his. By the time he returns after his interlude with his old pal, his father expired. It gives him immense relief. Yet to all intents and purposes he looks like a man sunk deep in sorrow. What an atrocious brand of hypocrisy it is, both shocking and repulsive. Narayanankutty is not just an outsider like Ravi of Vijayan; he is the image of the insensitive self seeker of today. He is immune to the tender affections of the human heart. Many novels of this category appeared in Malayalam between 1960 and 1990. They suggested the absurdity of life even as they exposed the hollowness of the value-system. We swear by our hoary culture and the nobility of our traditional values. But in practice we pay little reverence to them. To borrow an Arnoldian phrase we have become slaves of 'philistinism'. The Lord is no more our shepherd, the devils lead us by the nose; we dine with them without the traditional long spoon. The sociological writers

rejected the value system formulated by the 'haves' and registered their protest against the crippling social and economic structures. The modernists repudiated the philosophical concepts of essence and being. With them, the ultimate ('if there was any') was 'nothingness', what mattered most was existence and not essence.

The thrust in the writings of first decades of the present century and in the works termed progressive was on social justice.

Kumaran Asan wrote:

"Change the existing laws
Or they will wipe you out".

Changampuzha wrote:

"Has the law framed by the 'haves'
Anything to say (about this injustice)
I withdraw".

He cried:

"Whoever takes cognisance
Of the pathetic plight of
the depressed, and the destitute".

As years passed poets felt that evil held the whiphand in modern times.

In 'Mohan Das Gandhi and Nathuram Godse' N. V. Krishna Warriar sees Godse in power in modern society. Even Gandhi grows indignant at this reversal of values.

"In this soul of mine
Which has overcome wrath
You, evil man, indignation
Bursts forth vehemently 'Ha Ram.'"

In 'Sathya Vag moolam' K. Satchidanandan wrote about the total collapse of values in our country:

"The bell tolls, when liberty turns itself
Into the belly of the crying mother
Who fries and eats her children
She has brought forth in anguish,
When the heart that preaches justice and truth
Transforms itself into a bullet,
When the dancing girl hides her canine teeth
Behind a smile, when the school, the church

And the court raise fortresses of untruth
 Against the weapons with which
 Writers have armed the people,
 When cities and minds burn,
 The lame captain (Ahab of 'Moby Dick')
 Has his revenge upon the whale

.....
 I go like the Prince
 Who sick with the suffering he saw
 Went to the tree of Enlightenment.

According to Sugathakumari, the plight of the modern is almost that of a 'stoned dog'.

"Moaning and seeking some corner
 Haven't you seen its eyes
 Filled with dismay (and heard)
 The question
 What sin I committed to merit this reward ...
 Who has shed tears over his lot
 We turn away our eyes, as though
 We knew none of it.
 Thank you, you stood unmoved and watched me
 Thanks to the hand that threw the stone.

The more the modern tries to bear his burden and suffer his persecution the more he is tormented and tortured.

The following lines taken from Balachandran Chullikkad's "Visuddha Sandhya" express sheer indignation at the corruption of values.

"In the courtyard kids play about
 The 'crucified' is amidst them.
 Hymns of praise and stone-walls rise high
 The kids know not about assaulted fathers
 About the mounts of bitter fight
 Kids know not about the impending doom
 And again the agonised madonna
 Experiences labour pains
 On the street. The skeletons of birds sing
 In the silence enveloped
 With barks and darkness
 Glory to God on the highest

And peace to men of good will
 Under the earth is heard the cry
 Of kids who died in poverty.
 On the mainland wrath shrieks and the murdered rise up
 with crosses and hatches
 And above the frenzied street the alarum sounds
 Now the kids stop the play
 And lend their ears.

One of the most pathetic figures in modern Malayalam fiction is Kundan of Anand's novel 'Marubhoomikal Undakunnathu'. Kundan is the agonising symbol of countless victims of gross injustice in modern India. Here is a man hurled in flesh and blood into the burning inferno that does not altogether consume him.

The value crisis finds its metaphors in many a Malayalam short story and lyric. But do our writers suggest a remedy for it? Shall we cry 'all is lost' and then get ourselves lost? Shall we sit and languish and lament like Jewish captives in Babylon or weep like the fallen Richard II of William Shakespeare? Our writers seldom paint for us a land of milk and honey where the highest values prevail. O. V. Vijayan talks of the need for a Guru. Both Vijayan and Anand look upon Buddhism as an answer to all the depressing questions of modern times. There are poets like Ayyappa Panikker who consider humanism as a fountain of modern values. Others like O. N. V. Kurup has still faith in the efficacy of social revolutions to liberate humanity. Sugathakumari, with her concern for the eco-system believes that the Krishna image can restore dharma even in this godless world. But none knows for certain the source of the water of life that will render this wasteland into another Eden. Who shall bring the "mṛtha sanjeevini" and rejuvenate our society that has lost its vitality. Who will draft the plans of concrete and decisive action to see that the 'will of the ultimate' is done on Earth? Who will herald the advent of the saviour of humankind? We wait not for Godot, but for the Messiah, and our waiting shall not be in vain, we hope.

Human Relatedness and Moral Decision Making

Human relatedness is the basis of contemporary ethical thinking in contrast to traditional Aristotelian and Thomistic ethics based principally on the subjectivity of the individual. The autonomous centre of the human is relational. The recent liberation movements are peoples' movements, which challenge the traditional individualist anthropology. Human relationality has to be actualized in equitable societal structures.

Today more than ever the value and need for human solidarity is gaining momentum in liberation and human rights movements. This is happening at a moment when we see human society is faced with increasing stridency of divisive forces. Against this background, I want to stress human relatedness as being of fundamental importance for our being human and wholeness of human society. Hence a relational perspective is constitutive of all moral decisions by human persons as related beings.

In this short paper I offer some reflections on the value and significance of human relatedness in moral life.

1. Traditional ethics based on Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas was an ethics based on the subjectivity of individual, an autonomous centre of knowledge and freedom and of moral action. The specific rational nature of human being was the foundation of moral law and its precepts. The traditional Christian ethics developed on this basis and became an ethics of autonomy. It helped to affirm the dignity of individual and to evolve an ethics of action centred on freedom of the individual. The whole western theory and development of human rights is an expression of it. Such an approach brought with it a negative effect of individualism that ignores and denies the other subject. It is an ethics of subjectivity of individual without inter-subjectivity. In this approach the subjectivity of the other is an after thought and is of secondary significance in the ethics of autonomy. This approach is not adequate to understanding the humanum as historically shown by

colonialism, great world wars, contemporary ethnic and religious strifes in which peoples' cultures, their freedoms and rights were blatantly violated.

All this calls for a more adequate understanding of the humanum. The traditional understanding of human nature as specific rational nature needs to be rethought to include relationality as constitutive of humanum.

The autonomous centre of human subjectivity is a relational and a related subjectivity. Hence we need stress this relational dimension as fundamental to human subjectivity. Humanum is constituted as subjectivity in inter-subjectivity i. e., in relatedness. This brings us to what I call relational anthropology. It can be expressed in a somewhat popular but correct way: To be human is to be inter-human and to be related. Here I would like to make an observation. There has been a tendency in traditional approach to morality to separate personal morality from social morality. In this approach one makes specific rational nature of human being rooted in subjectivity the basis of personal morality. While discussing social ethics relationality and social nature are brought in as if there were different foundations for each of these two moralities. This is a flawed approach. I stress that all morality personal and social is rooted in a relational humanum. The latter founds both personal and social morality. Without this one foundation, we dichotomise morality into personal and social. This leads to an absence of consistency in ethics. The point here is that person in community (relational humanum) is the foundation of all human morality.

In recent history, the relational anthropology was brought into focus by liberation movements which are basically peoples' movements¹. Solidarity of oppressed peoples awakens them to their relatedness and to their shared subjectivity and empowers them for struggle for their liberation. Their inter-subjectivity shapes their solidarity in their quest for dignity, freedom and community. In all this relational anthropology is operative.

Liberation movements of oppressed peoples question the traditional anthropology centred on the subjectivity of the individual

1 Cf. D. Mieth and J. Pohier, *The Ethics of Liberation — The Liberation of Ethics*. Edinburgh: T. T. Clark Ltd., 1984.

divorced from inter-subjectivity and point to the inadequacy of such an anthropology. Personhood is related to peoplehood. Moreover in such movements of people, there is a rediscovery of the fundamental quality of relatedness as constitutive of the humanum which should inform and influence all moral decisions.

One important fallout of this new awareness has affected the western theory of human rights centred on the subjectivity of the individual. Hence today one speaks of the need for rethinking of human rights in terms of liberation paradigm² that captures the spirit of human solidarity rooted in the understanding of humanum as relational humanum. It also helps articulation of human rights in terms of social rights and peoples' rights. It is interesting to note that while the universal Declaration of Human Rights of the U.N. (1948) based on the dignity of the individual recognised by the nations of the world was a great advance in the post-war period, it soon became apparent that this was not enough. Hence in the subsequent history of the U.N. when many countries were becoming free from the fetters of colonialism, the affirmation of peoples' rights for self-determination came into focus. Various conventions and covenants of the U.N. guaranteeing social rights of ethnic, racial, minority groups such as indigenous peoples became a necessity. All this points again to the discovery of solidarity rooted in human relatedness.

Collective rights become clear in case of racism, casteism and untouchability. Racism, casteism and untouchability are not mere discriminations against individual human beings of society. They are discriminations against the members of a whole group of people. Discrimination against a black touches all black people. So too, casteism and untouchability. In all this, the fundamental human relatedness of all human beings is being denied on the basis of racism, casteism and untouchability. These discriminations are violation of people's right to community and solidarity and therefore their right to human relatedness. They are collective biases and prejudices that vitiate and disrupt human relationships. They sectarianise and communalise them. Their divisive impulse blocks the spontaneity of human relationships, leading to easy

2 Aloysius Pierris, "Human Rights Language and Liberation Theology" *Vidyajyoti* 52 (1988), pp. 522-536.

manipulation and exploitation. History bears abundant testimony to the huge damage done to peoples, their personhood and peoplehood, their dignity and rights.

If relationality is constitutive of being human, it needs to enter into the dynamic actualization of every human person. Every moral decision a person makes actualises not only one's subjectivity but also the relationality of the human person. But the actualization of relationality is open-ended and multi-faceted. It needs to grow into greater relatedness or community and solidarity transcending factors, structures and forces that exclude, divide, hierarchise, sectarianise and communalise people.

Moreover human relationality needs to be actualised in a structural sense. It needs to be embodied in societal structures in a way that they become conducive to its liberative actualization. In a divided world, such an actualization will have to face structures that block it. For example, in a society of caste hierarchy human relationality cannot be actualised in a sense of equality of dignity of human persons. The reason is hierarchical social order of castes divides relationality of people into high and low and therefore grades them into inequality. It means, not always mentioned or discussed, that hierarchical social order implies a hierarchical anthropology. In such an anthropology, the fundamental equality of human relationality is a major casualty because it hierarchises human beings. Hence one cannot build a theory of human rights and much less peoples' rights on hierarchical anthropology in which human being is homo hierarchicus.

I know that orthodox Hindus, especially the higher castes will not accept an anthropology that affirms the fundamental relationality as egalitarian, and not hierarchical. In my opinion, the reason why Ambedkar and dalit liberation movements reject the varna system is that it basically hierarchises human beings. Their liberation cannot be realised in this system. It demands an egalitarian anthropology. The voice of the worst victims of caste hierarchy reveals the human bankruptcy of caste hierarchy. The latter is an ideology of caste power.

In hierarchical relatedness of human beings as in caste-based society one cannot actualise the human relationality as a solidarity of human beings. Moral decisions that embody human relationality supposes the equality of dignity of human persons.

Hence my point is that hierarchical anthropology can never be the basis of moral law, but only an egalitarian anthropology that affirms the equal dignity of every human person actualised in relatedness can be the basis.

Human relatedness is multifaceted. The multifaceted relationality points to inter-human relatedness between human persons and community of persons expressed also in societal relatedness and relatedness between human persons and cosmos. Moreover the deteriorating environment resulting in ecological crisis is failure to respect the multifaceted relatedness. All this calls for an affirmation of human relatedness with everyone and with everything. It is a call for inter-human harmony and harmony with nature. Hence there is a need for an ethics of harmony and solidarity of peoples and harmony of human community with nature.

If all this has to be a value horizon in moral decisions, the relational perspective calls for both individual and collective responsibility. All that diminishes human relatedness diminishes human dignity and human fulfilment. Therefore responsibility for human relatedness in a broken and divided world will be exercised with a liberative thrust³. Respect for and promotion of the multifaceted human relatedness is a great challenge to humankind. The future of humankind lies in harmony and solidarity of all peoples of the earth.

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3 S. Arokiasamy, S. J., "Sarvodaya through Antyodaya — The Liberation of the Poor in the Contextualisation of Morals", *Vidyajyoti* 51 (1987), pp. 545-564.

The Dynamics of Moral Decision Making

The fragility of man's moral goodness is attested to by religions as well as modern psychology. Morality is associated with both human solidarity and tragedy. One's actions are good or bad as they affect other people's goals, and also the ultimate goal of one's life. Hence the nature of the specific object aimed at the agent's intentions and circumstances, and the place of the action in the given social system determine the nature of moral decisions.

St. Paul's statement: "It is not the good I want to do but the evil that I do not want to do that I do;" (Rom. 7: 21) has been the Achilles heel of all philosophical attempts to assign responsibility for the ills of our society. As Alasdair MacIntyre points out the central functional concept of all moral arguments within both the Greek and Medieval traditions was that of "man understood as having an essential nature and an essential purpose or function".¹ Aristotle takes up as his starting point man's relationship to 'living well', analogous to the harpist's playing the harp well. Long before Aristotle for ancient Greeks to be a man was to fill a set of roles as a member of the society such as the head of a family, a soldier, a priest or a philosopher. But in the mechanistic age this functional role of man as a member of society is very much lost and in its place the image of the isolated individual, struggling to survive in a world of opposing forces has emerged.

The first discovery humanity made regarding moral decision was that it was a free decision by a rational being and hence difficult. The story of the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis clearly presents the problem. Eve is presented on the one hand with the prospect of becoming similar to God knowing right and wrong and deciding as an adult by violating the seemingly arbitrary prohibition of God against eating from the fruit of the tree of good

1 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Notre Dame, Ind. Notre Dame Univ. Press, 1981, p. 56.

and evil, and on the other hand of maintaining the personal loyalty to the Creator by abiding by his will even in the minute details. The Biblical writer's idea along with that of the Jewish scholars who counted six hundred and thirteen prescriptions of God in the Torah was that even the least command of God had the divine authority and that a violation of it would be a rebellion against God. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, with the statement that the sabbath is for man and not man for the sabbath introduced another principle: God's law and every moral prescription is not for the sake of God but for the sake of the human, and hence the seriousness of a law should be decided by seeing how its observance or violation affected the human himself/herself.

This fragility of human's moral good is clearly presented in Greek mythology. Aeschyles presents the difficult choice Agamemnon had to make: He is on his way with a large number of ships to Troy at the command of Zeus to avenge the abduction of Helen. But Artemis another deity intervenes by calming the winds and the priest Calchas announces that the winds would not move the sails unless Agamemnon sacrificed his own daughter Iphigenia, and that otherwise all including Iphigenia would starve to death on the sea shore. So Agamemnon makes the difficult choice for which his own wife will later kill him. Similarly Sophocles brings out the difficult moral choice of Antigone: After having gone out with her father Oedipus when he was cruelly driven out by her brothers, and stayed with him till his glorious end, she is faced with a hard choice: She can choose the path of committing treason by acting against the strict prohibition of king Creon and giving a burial to her brother killed in a revolt against his fatherland, or violate her religious duty towards him by denying him a burial. She makes the hard choice thereby forfeiting her own life.

With modern psychological schools the problem has become worse. Thus according to Freud, psychoanalysis "seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind".² Freud's achievement is that his analysis of

2 Complete Psychological Works, trs. James Strachey, London: Hogarth Press, 1966, vol. 16, pp. 284-85.

the unconscious applied not only to the neurotic psyche but also to the normal psyche. According to Plato man is composed of reason and passion, the rational being tied to an animal. Freud broke through this reason-passion and conscious-unconscious distinction and showed that when some one complained of two souls, both were rational, one more or less sane and the other more or less crazy. Conscience is not any divine principle like the 'daimon' of Socrates, but like passion itself, one more set of human beliefs and desires, another story about how the world is. It is neither automatically subject to another, nor automatically privileged. One has to look at the stories told by id, ego and superego as alternative extrapolations from a common experience, especially of childhood events, in order to make those events coherent with later events.

Morality is associated both with human solidarity as well as with tragedy. Morality can mean either the attempt to be just in one's treatment of others or the search for perfection in oneself. The former is public morality, intimately bound up with culture, codifiable in maxims and statutes, while the latter is private morality concentrating on the development of character. According to John Macmurray, as one grows up, one's apperception can be contemplative, submitting oneself to the environment of persons, or pragmatic of using persons for one's own purposes, or communal of interacting with others for the common good. The contemplative approach is either good or bad according to the resulting experiences, and the pragmatic may be right or wrong according as it is efficiently performed or not. But these by themselves are not moral. An efficiently and skillfully performed action can be also immoral. The moral rightness of an action comes from the communal apperception. "The moral problematic of all action — the possibility that any action may be morally right or wrong — arises from the conflict of wills, and morality, in any mode, is the effort to resolve this conflict."³

Coordinates of a Moral Decision

The question is how a person's actions affect the actions of another either by way of help or hindrance. The nature of the action, the intention of the agent, the actual concrete circumstances,

3 John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, London: Faber and Faber, 1961, p. 116.

the consequences of the action, and the total social framework enter into the discussion of morality. No one would want to do evil for its own sake. It is the circumstances surrounding the evil, that make it appear good and attractive. Similarly often the action itself may be indifferent in itself; but the circumstances and consequences make them intrinsically evil. Above all, the intention of the agent choosing the action with its given circumstances and foreseen consequences encounter the intention of another rational subject.

This means that morality is essentially social. But it is not the coming together of isolated individuals and their purely extrinsic or accidental relationship. To imply moral responsibility one has to suppose that those individuals are bound in a common structure of I-You relationship. The intention of one agent is inherently related to the intention of the other. Hence the morality of an action is inherent in the action itself and not accidentally added to it.⁴

If one were all autonomous all one's actions would be right as expressions of his will, the faculty of good. Only intentional actions can be right or wrong, and its rightness lies in the rightness of the intention. But the ground for this rightness lies in the Other, who also is intentional and hence personal. Even our personal actions are moral because they implicitly aim at our final happiness which we expect from a transcendental and personal ultimate goal. Even in the finite order, moral rightness is based on how our action is going to affect others. The world is a continuum of actions with a number of agents involved. Action by its very nature is a determination of the future, and so the basic condition for the creation of a world of well-being for all concerned is the unity of intentions of those involved. Thus truthfulness is the basis of mutual credibility among human beings. If one decides to tell a lie and it is judged all right for him to do so it is the credibility of all that is affected. So the actions of different responsible agents must be unified in one action. This interrelation of agents is the ground of morality. It provides a reference beyond themselves for all possible intentions in virtue of which they can be either right or wrong morally. Hence the freedom of any agent is conditioned

4 Ibid., p. 117.

inherently by the action of all other agents. This simply means that a moral decision gets its moral character in the context of a community.

But this basic Greek approach to morality is founded on a metaphysics of presence. It equates truth with an intelligibility of presence, namely truth is that which is present or co-present, that which can be gathered or synchronized into a totality or cosmos. Aristotelian ethics is bounded by the inner walls of human nature and does not go beyond it. For the Greeks intelligibility was what could be rendered present and what could be represented in some eternal here-and-now, exposed and disclosed in pure light. For them Being itself was essentially presence. So however different the terms of a relation might be like the Divine and the human, or separated like past and present, they were all ultimately rendered commensurate and simultaneous.

For the Athenians the ethical rules were what the citizens decided had to be observed in order to create for themselves a city and a civilization. Even the Gods had to conform themselves to the demands of the cities and their particular laws. When the Persians came they destroyed the temples because they found it abhorrent to confine the celestial beings in the limited space of the temple walls. When the city states regained their independence from the Persians they rebuilt the temples and decreed that the Gods like Apollo and Artemis should be reinstated in their temples to be guarantors of people's oaths and guardians of the state laws. It was an ethics of control. Instead of allowing nature to run according to the demands of Being and its inner laws, the human wanted to control everything. This ethics of control dominates the Western moral outlook even today. People want to control their own lives free from the botheration of extraneous moral rules! So there is justification for abortion on demand, divorce on demand, and also euthanasia, the euphemism for the power to eliminate people when they become an inconvenience to others.

The Specificity of the Object

But this metaphysics of presence of Greek philosophy is broken by the later development of the transcendental character of the object. The object is the determining principle of the action, action specifies the faculty, and the faculty in turn specifies nature.

For Plato this object was the Good, the form of all forms. The Good was the sun of the moral universe. Just as the sun illuminating the things illumines also the eye and makes actively perceive things, so the reflection of the Good in things makes them both lovable and knowable.⁵ Similarly Aristotle's Immovable Mover. Thought thinking itself, moves all things as the object of their knowledge and love.⁶

For Emmanuel Kant, however, the source of moral obligation was the categorical imperative. Obligation could be accounted for either from the external objects outside or from reason. The things out there could be reached only through the empirical field which could not affect the higher spiritual order. So the source of obligation was assigned to practical reason, the Will, which is the faculty of the Good. This sounds mere subjectivism. But as Hartman remarks Kant had a special reason to assign morality to the subjective realm: "Subjectivism in ethics stands nearer to the fact than it does in the domain of theory. Its main root accordingly lay for Kant in ethics. Its chief concern is the freedom of the will. The will evidently is free only in so far as it bears within itself its own ground of determination. Its highest principle accordingly — however much it may take on the form of an imperative — must emanate from the constitution of the subject."⁷ But the will in so far as it is supposed to be free to follow the principle or not, cannot be at the same time the originator of the principle.

The originator of the principle of obligation has to be the absolute and eternal value. According to Jaimini, the author of the Mimamsa Sutra, the source of the moral obligation is the imperative itself, which is independently and defectlessly connected to the eternal value.⁸ Values are not only independent of the things that are valuable (goods) but are actually their presupposition. As Hartman says: "They are that whereby things possess the character of 'goods'."⁹ Just as we experience things as agreeable,

5 The Republic Bk V.

6 Metaphysics, Bk XII, ch. 9.

7 Nicolai Hartman, *Ethics*, vol. 1, Moral Phenomena, London: George Allen and Unwin, 3rd impr. 1958, p. 158.

8 Mimamsa Sutra I, 5, *Aupattikah tu sabdasya arthena sambandhah tasya jnanam upadesah avyatikrah ca arthe anulabdhe*.

9 Hartman, *Ethics*, p. 187.

useful, serviceable etc. on account of a further good, one has to come to an ultimate value. For example we take a job, earn money, in order to make a living all for the ultimate value of life itself. This sense of value is not learned from another since the very act of learning should have behind it a sense of need for it. Hence an important question for Greeks was whether virtue could be taught, since virtue was the very supposition for learning and allowing oneself to be taught.

But this value that determines our decisions is not an impersonal reality. Hartman explains this: "Every moral value is a value of disposition, but all disposition is towards some one. It has a real object, and this is always a person or a community of persons. It has such an object even when the act is purely inward, merely intended, merely a disposition without action, indeed without any utterance. The object is always still a person. We deal with persons, not with things; we are disposed towards persons not towards things.¹⁰ In contrast to the goods of value that accompany the moral decision, the moral disposition itself is in relation to a subject, namely to the other person, who is involved in the structure of the ethical contents. It is to him or them that my dealing with the goods ultimately refers, and becomes morally permissive or prohibitive.

The Principle of Mediation

There are two suppositions of Greek ethics that still plague Western ethical thinking. One is the restricted stand point from which ethical decisions are made, and the other the assumption of equality as the basic principle for moral decisions. For Aristotle arete was the life style of the rich. The Athenian citizens were not involved with menial work of any kind, which was entirely left to slaves; nor did they undertake profitable business enterprises which were mostly left to foreign business men. So the life of the Athenian nobility spent mostly in detached political and moral discussions was considered the ideal kind of life for all free human beings. Hence the morality was measured by the life and virtues of the rich. The poor who had to eke out an existence through hard work with no time left for philosophy was not ideal. The Christian Gospel reversed the whole situation and declared the

10 Hartman, *Ethics*, p: 212.

poor blessed, and the rich incapable of attaining salvation. It was more difficult for the rich man to go to heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Today the preferential option for the poor is the angle from which the morality of any action is decided. We have to remember that Jesus was speaking to a people among whom there were very few rich. Hence his moral teaching was not so much a diatribe against the rich as an encouragement to the poor. He told them that they were blessed, that theirs was the kingdom of heaven. It is true that even today the poor are in such an impossible situation that owing to the unjust structures they have no hope of improving their economic and social condition.

In this situation we have to be on the side of the poor against the rich and fight for their rights. In order to understand the society as it actually is, we have to examine it from its underside, through the eyes of its victims. The strength of a chain is in its weakest link, and if the weakest members of society are taken care of, the whole society will take care of itself. But this does not mean that the poor are always right or that the sole norm for public policy is to make the poor economically, socially and politically equal to the rich. A moral system built up only with the concerns and interests of the poor is as unjust as one which looks after the interests of the rich alone.

Another principle of Athenian ethics was the equality of all the citizens. They considered this equality so fundamental that even public officials were chosen by lot than by a careful examination of their competence for the job. One point on which Socrates sharply differed with the Athenians was his strong plea that only those who had the divine insight for leadership should be assigned as leaders: The ideal king should be a philosopher. As he himself admitted this was an impossible proposition. Still West has institutionalized equality, and whenever there is the need to be subordinate to some one it is an embarrassing situation. On the other hand India has institutionalized inequality. When there is absolute equality there is uncertainty and conflict and there is need to establish a sort of hierarchy. How this affects our moral decisions is an important question.

An important fact in today's moral thinking is the complexity of the interpersonal situations in which people become morally

involved. The structure of the situation determines to a great extent what is moral and what is immoral. For example in the context of a criminal trial, there is the prosecutor who accuses some one of a crime, the accused or the defendant, his lawyer or attorney, the witnesses and the judge. The first principle is that the accused is not obliged to accuse himself, and it is the duty of the prosecutor to bring out the truth of the case and convict the guilty. The defending attorney's duty is to help his client to vindicate himself. So though he may know privately some incriminating details he is not obliged to reveal them. The witnesses under oath have to reveal their information regarding the case and stating falsehood would be perjury. The judge has to pronounce the verdict according to the evidence presented and not according to his preferences or hunches or private knowledge. Only if each partner in the complex judicial system keeps to his particular role with regard to truth, the judicial system will work. It is an interpersonal situation in which everyone concerned with the truth of the matter, has to play his role. Thus the given system is the principle of mediation that determines the moral responsibility of each person concerned.

In the same way morality of an action is mediated by the particular system in which the decision is made. The various branches of human life has developed so much in the modern age that it will be impossible for any general practitioner of ethics to draw from a few basic principles some neat moral conclusions applicable in every field. Only people conversant with the implications of the practices in the medical profession may be able to judge what the right or wrong decision in medical ethics be. Similarly industrial relations present ethical issues which only someone fully knowledgeable about the interests and concerns of the various parties involved can make the right ethical judgment. Professional ethics is a vast area with various branches and subdivisions which no one can manage from the armchair of a moral theologian or ethicist in the traditional sense.

Ethical Decisions in the Socio-Political Fields

More complex is decision making in the socio-political fields where a person or a group of persons is faced with several alternative courses, but has only incomplete information regarding the nature and consequences of the programmes. There is no

doubt that one has to try his best to gather enough information to make a reasonable judgment at least to avoid serious damage to people's interests. The general principle proposed by Utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham was that of utility. Their supposition was that one could never attain any kind of clarity or certainty in ethical matters as in mathematics and the empirical sciences. So one has to act with a sense of nobility and generosity to act with the aim of providing "the greatest good for the greatest number"¹¹. But once there was uncertainty about the consequence the calculus of utility could not work for making the decision.

But as Aristotle himself stated, only rarely and in most obvious cases could one have absolute certainty in moral decisions. Generally, moral decisions are closer to political strategies. Hence as Daniel Bernoulli (1738) stated what is to be looked for is the expected utility. An individual has to choose between several possible decisions and fix upon a course of action that maximizes the utility expected of those for whom the course of action is intended and minimizes the risks involved. Here one has to start with probability rather than mere utility. There can be various grades of probability regarding the rightness of each course of action that is contemplated. It may be irrational to follow an expected utility that is only weakly probable. Some argue that one has to follow the most probable. This also is not necessary since even the most probable is only probable and not certain. What is important is that in one's decision one follows what is solidly probable. Here the action is decided by the probable good that is expected, merely permitting the risk that what is expected may not perhaps occur.

When there are several courses of action each member of the society has a preferential ordering of those possibilities. As social scientists point out the just and equitable social decision should not be satisfied merely with taking the majority preference of the people concerned. There may be a number of irrelevant alternatives that have to be eliminated. For example in an election the entry of a number of candidates who would not make any difference has to be discounted. What is to be stressed is a positive association of social and individual values. The social

11 Jeremy Bentham, *Principle of Morality and Legislation*.

decision method should not be imposed from the outside but should come as the free decision of the community itself. Hence a dictatorial imposition of a social decision method is actually a contradiction in terms. Here a social scientist or another specialist coming from the outside and deciding for the uneducated villagers the project most appropriate for them is a typical example. The project may be or may not be financially successful. But it is a sure loser in human and moral terms. To be humanly valuable for the people, they have to be actively and intelligently involved in deciding the project and in executing it.

The Naked Face of the Other

The fundamental reason for the moral decision is the good of the other or others. The basic command is: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself!" because only by loving your brother whom you see can you love God whom you do not see. As the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has strongly emphasized, the divine command: "You shall not kill!" shows that your neighbour has a priority over you, and that you are enjoined to protect him and safeguard him. Your relationship to him is not indirect, not for reason of anything else, but direct, for reason of his naked face. The Hindu principle of "ahimsa" is not a purely negative one. As similar words with the prefix 'a' like 'a-krodha' and 'a-droha' indicate, the prohibition of killing involves the injunction of all positive services opposed to killing such as loving, serving and safeguarding. When I permit a single human being to be wronged against, it is my own humanity that I am violating. Hence Socrates argues strongly that it is far better to suffer injustice than to inflict it in any way to another. Aristotle corrects him and states that it is still better to see that no one, including myself, has to suffer injustice.

Religions in the past have justified violence by sacralizing it through mythology. Totemism took refuge in the image of an ancestral animal, the lion, the tiger etc. to justify one tribe's violence against another tribe. Saul goes to make war against the various tribes under the pretext of a divine command. Even Islam undertook its religious wars against various nations with the sense of a divine mission to establish Allah's law and rule over all idolators and corrupters of Scriptures, and the Christian nations of Europe undertook the violent crusades in order to protect the "Holy Land"

against desecration by the "infidels"! But there is a slow demythologization of religion to recognize violence as man's cruelty to another human being. This realization dawns when Abraham is tested in his faith by the divine command to sacrifice his own son. Abraham's readiness to obey ends with the acknowledgement that self-sacrifice is the real sacrifice. The burden of the Book of Job is to show that the victim has the last word.¹²

The central message of the Gospels is that in the death of the Son of God the position of the victim has assumed central importance. "The hidden infrastructure of all religions and all cultures is in the process of declaring itself," as the self-transcendence of all humanity.¹³ The gospel's anthropology was slow to develop, because the moral, intellectual and epistemological effects of the gospel revelation have of necessity developed gradually. 'The prerequisite for the development of the science of anthropology was the kind of cultural objectivity that arises only after a moral dissonance has been set up between the individual and the sanctioned structures of that individual's own culture.'¹⁴ It took Paul in his encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus to realize how murderous he had become in the name of his own culture to persecute the Jews who had embraced Christianity. Even today people commit violence against other races and nations with the myth of the superiority of one's culture, political system and the like. The holocaust of six million Jews by Hitler and all the mass-murders and attempts at genocides show the survival of myth in one form or another. But myth is fragile and survives only when its premises are accepted uncritically. When myth is recognized as illusion and removed from the picture what remains is one's personal relation to one's neighbour in God.

The priority of one's ethical relation to the other over his own ontological relation to himself shows, according to Levinas that the relationship with the other is time: "It is an untotalizable diachrony in which one moment pursues another without ever

12 See Rene Girard, *Job: The Victim of His People*, Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1987.

13 See Rene Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1987, p. 256.

14 See Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled, Humanity at the Crossroads*, New York: Crossroad, 1995, p. 38.

being able to retrieve it, to catch up or coincide with it. The non-simultaneous and non-present is my primary rapport with the other in time. Time means that the other is forever beyond me, irreducible to the synchrony of the same. The temporality of the interhuman opens up the meaning of otherness and the otherness of meaning."¹⁵ But in moral relationships there are often more than one other involved. As soon as there are three, the ethical relationship with the other becomes political, and a morally right action is an action which intends the community. Emmanuel Kant had noted this and formulated in one of the moral modes by saying "Act always as a legislating member of a kingdom of ends". But, as McMurray states, "the world is one action, any particular action determines the future, within its own limits, for all agents"¹⁶.

The intention of each agent is relative to his knowledge of the other, and his responsibility cannot extend beyond his knowledge. Still the relation of persons is constitutive for their existence as persons, and hence they can be themselves and realize their freedom as agents only through their relation to one another. Most people go through life without proper reflection on their existential reality in a purely pragmatic way aiming at only their personal interests. Others may adopt a contemplative mode. For them the real world is the spiritual world and the real life is spiritual life. This can be an escape from the real world into an attitude of an unconcerned spectator. Both these are negative modes of perception, and egocentric in character. But our world is a world of persons and of interpersonal relationships. With that apprehension of the world and reality, moral decisions have to be communal. It rests on a positive motivation and aims at creating a beneficial future for all human beings.

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15 Quoted in Richard Kearney, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers*, Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1984, p. 57.

16 John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, p. 119.

The Main Points that Emerged from the Discussions at the Seminar

The discussions by groups helped to pinpoint some of the principal issues concerning the present day crisis in moral values.

1. Where is the Crisis?

The first question was whether moral values themselves were in crisis or rather the society which failed to live up to the values. Values are desired-goals or ideals of life and as such they can be identified only in life-situations. The dominant groups naturally project their values and make them eternal. It is the failure of both Capitalism and Marxism to bring about the universal prosperity they projected that has caused the erosion of the values promoted by those systems. Similarly the religions that promoted their respective values have lost their hold on people. The socio-economic changes have brought new values into prominence, which are more helpful to the new society. Those which appeared more important at one time have become less important. The crisis is in society itself. Traditional structures and their vested interests are in crisis.

2. Legitimate human concerns

It was generally felt that values evolve out of the experience of people and there is a genuine value system that grows from below in sharp contrast to the values imposed from above, by ideologies and metaphysical systems. These values are the consequence of the legitimate struggles of people for freedom and liberation from unjust structures. So the starting point of morality is the experience of the dehumanization process in society. Moral values are properly perceived when we examine society through the eyes of its victims. On the other hand, one should not forget that Plato and Aristotle built up their moral systems by fighting against the masses nourished by the slogans of poets and politicians. Hence ascribing moral righteousness to one section alone of society will be an oversimplification!

3. Are there universal values?

One question heatedly discussed was whether one could speak of universal values. Absolutization of any human norms of behaviour is forgetting that human life is conditioned by time and place, society and culture which are bound to change. On

the other hand all tend to happiness and perfect happiness. This ultimate goal of life imposes certain demands which are universally binding. Sociology refuses to recognize any absolute and immutable values. Religion and metaphysics define the universal nature of the human and the rules and conditions that should govern his life. Living literature, novels, drama and poetry arising from the actual experience of people cry against the existing injustices and point to certain norms that have to be observed at all times by every one. Defining these norms of behaviour in the changing vicissitudes of life is the task of ethics.

4. The capitalistic and socialist moralities

The socialist society calls for justice and equity, as the basic moral norm, while the capitalist society is concerned only with profit. But some pointed out that, genuine capitalism emphasized basic moral virtues of frugality, hard work, and self-reliance and that the efficiency it advocated was that of bringing the best from each one. Shrinking by many capitalist industries in recent time throwing thousands out of work was pointed out as an example to show that capitalism cared only for profit. In response it was said that intensification of capital and consequent automation led to overall increase of wealth and produced more jobs. Each system has its own moral principles which can often be misinterpreted and distorted. What is important is to judge each system by its own inner rules and self-imposed regulations.

5. Ultimate source of moral values

Our moral choice affects not only the individuals and societies immediately involved but the whole humankind and even the cosmos. Looking for the satisfaction of immediate needs alone leads to the rape of nature, depletion of natural resources and makes our globe less and less hospitable to humankind. Hence the well-being of all humans, and the promotion of every cosmic reality should be the guiding principle of moral choices. India has always looked on Nature as Mother. So Gandhian way stressed non-violence and satyagrahas. Similarly the Way of Christ looks at the will of God as the source of all morality. Hence "Antyodaya", the uplift of the weakest and least of society, should be the ideal. "When you did it to the least of my brethren, you did it to me" said Christ. When the needs and concerns of the poor and marginalised are given importance, society as a whole remains healthy. Any legitimate order should be based on the fundamental value of the human person. So "it is far better to suffer injustice than to inflict injustice", said Socrates, because when you avoid injustice even when suffering injustice, you show your real humanity. The basic command "you shall not kill" implies the other is equal to you because he is a child of God, and in a sense your own Self.

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*This program is supported by a grant from
The Pew Charitable Trusts.*